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BY

GWENDOLEN OVERTON

AUTHOR OF "THE HERITAGE OF UNREST," "ANNE
CARMEL," ETC.



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*“The leaders of industry, if industry is ever to be led,
are virtually the captains of the world.”*

—CARLYLE.



GENERAL



CAPTAINS OF THE WORLD

CHAPTER I

El hombre no conoce la medida de los males que puede sufrir hasta que ha hecho la prueba.

Man does not know the measure of the ills he can bear until he has put it to the proof.

WITH a fearlessness the result of familiarity, Beatrice Tennant moved a few steps nearer to the heating pits, and stood watching that one out of the many gorgeous and terrible sights which made for her the fascination of the mills, bringing her back to them time and again whenever the opportunity offered. It had offered to-night through Durran, who had been under the necessity of showing a regulation sight to a visiting stranger and his wife.

The wife, whose emotions maturity had not regulated, had displayed an inclination to hold Durran responsible for much that she saw and imagined, and he had been glad to put her and her husband under charge of the nearest available foreman. Having thereby relieved himself from aimless questionings, he now followed Beatrice into the zone of heat, where men worked on ground that burst with flame, and here and there

yielded up to a dipping iron beak some candent ingot of steel.

"I have just been asked," he told her, "for what sins of their fathers or their own these people are condemned to this."

She could feel for him. More than once she had herself been faced with demands of the same sort.

"Being only the general manager and not an All-wise, Inscrutable Providence, I could only reply after my kind. So I doubtless stand judged by her as a monster of brutality for having suggested that their case might be one of choice, not of condemnation,—and that this torture, like most others, is pretty well deadened by habit."

She did not answer, and almost at the moment there fell an ominous silence where had just been the roar and thunder crashing from the beam-mill. It was the unpleasant stillness of something gone wrong, and though Durran started at once for the building, when he reached there, fearing a possible accident, he kept Beatrice back at the edge. By the sizzling arc-lights far above and by the glow from an unfinished beam, they saw that the rolls had stopped. One of the helpers at the rolls was coming down from his place, and making for the open side of the mill, to seize the opportunity for a breath of air at least a little less poisoned than the fetid vapors he had inhaled for hours past. Durran stopped him, and questioned. The man, a

savage-looking Hungarian with an imperfect knowledge of English, made it understood that the trouble was nothing more than some hitch in the power-house which had brought things to a temporary standstill.

Over by the deserted train of rolls the department superintendent had been in conversation with a subordinate. Now, looking around, he caught sight of the two upon the outskirts of his domains, and recognizing them for the manager and the company president's daughter, he crossed over to them forthwith. His elaboration of the helper's explanation was only partially intelligible to the girl, but apparently satisfactory to Durran. And even as he talked he was cut short by the resumption of work. The roller was at his post again, and the glistering, crimson block began passing back and forth, under and over, narrowing, lengthening each time, — a splendid serpent of fire, tame and harmless so long as its masters took heed, capable of smiting them with the death which consumed the sons of Levi at the altar, did they depart one jot or tittle from the law — the law of unwavering care. Instead of silence there was again the clanking and clangor and detonation, a recurrent deafening crash as of artillery and the howl of the saw as cold steel cut its way through red-hot beams, sending out a wheel of sparks in vivid hues.

The superintendent accompanied his important visitors down the great length of the building, and left

them to go alone on their way through the yards. It took them to the open hearth department where the other two were waiting. They picked their steps among the confused lines and switches of the tracks to the row of furnaces extending along one side.

A furnace was to be tapped, and when they came to it a workman offered Beatrice his pair of blue goggles. She put them on rather than repulse the well-meant attention to a woman whom he probably did not know but took to be one of the usual visitors desirous of missing nothing. Yet she would have preferred to miss this, knowing by previous experience that even with the dark glasses one might not remain entirely undazzled by the boiling, milky metal. The shutter being lifted she looked through the little opening, and as she took off the glasses to give them back there was a red blur over her vision. Through it she saw indistinctly that a man came by her, stopped abruptly, and drew together the shirt above his breast. A touch upon her arm made her turn away her head at the instant and go with Durran around to the back of the furnace, where the tapping-bar had already broken the fire-clay and the molten metal was beginning to flow out into the ladle, looking coldly clear and white. She drew back from the searing heat, unendurable to her, although the black shapes of men worked in it at the pit's very edge. As they threw in the recarburizer the flames rose, roaring and bellowing and shaking the shed.

She bent her arm before her face. Durran laid a reassuring hand upon her shoulder. She lifted her head at once, and moved slightly away.

The manganese turned the flames to saffron and violet and brilliant green ; the slag bubbled off in frothing scum. Then at length the metal flowed more and more slowly until it became an igneous dribble. The traveling crane picked up the ladle with its fifty tons of steel in fusion, and slowly, evenly, turned it, setting it down upon the car which waited. The little engine puffed and screeched on the rails, and pulled its dangerous load away down a vista of beams and girders and overhead tracks, of machinery coarse, gigantic, and black rooted in the earth, merging into the smoke and vapor high above. As the ladle passed it showed all around it, even to the corrugated iron of the roof, sooty and glow-edged.

The pit itself was still on fire with spilled steel and slag. A rolling gust of heat came up from it. On the edge, at the farther side, Beatrice saw among the workers one of the many whom she knew. It was Manning, a melter, and she was convinced at once that it had been he who had come up facing her at the door of the furnace while her sight had still been blurred. He was not looking toward her, — would not, she believed, — perhaps misinterpreting her failure to recognize him.

The breasts of the other workmen, glistening wet, were bared widely. His shirt was still drawn together

and closed. But the sleeves were rolled back from a sinewy forearm, a model for a sculptor's bronze. He stood near the pit a moment longer. Then, still without glancing over at the opposite side, went away.

On the guarded bridge which led out from the yards, Beatrice stopped and looked back over a fire-cored, nebulous world. Down below a yard engine passed slowly, dragging a row of red-hot ingots. There came a shivering rumble, a burst of glare which belched and spread and pulsed, first crimson, then white, then varying blues. She saw, by it, the river with its railway bridges, the town of Staunton close at hand, the wilderness of serried stacks rising from roofs crowded away in the darkness. And she saw, too, not many yards distant, a man who had come out from the open hearth building and was standing alone in the night. The light grew softer, more yellow, as the Bessemer blast died down, leaving only — reflected upon the low hanging smoke — a luminous, pale haze.

CHAPTER II

Money rules because men are for sale.—FERGUSON. *The Religion of Democracy.*

“THE Prince Valerio?” questioned Tennant, in a surprise not untinged with awe, although he gave it as casual an accent as, taken unprepared, he could command. Beatrice laid the card back on the footman’s tray, and it was carried to her father. Putting down the novel in his hand, he read it. But he derived little enlightenment from the perusal, and he said so, looking over with sharp, concentrated eyes at the daughter who was so frequently inscrutable to him.

“He is an Italian,” she went into detail. “He is travelling in this country, and I met him last month in New York.”

She was sitting at a big office desk at one side of the library, near an open fire, and the letter she had been writing lay unfinished before her.

Tennant still observed her narrowly. He had the not infrequent feeling that there was, in Beatrice, a good deal more than appeared outwardly in her somewhat indifferent manner. What it might be, he had, however, never thought of trying to find out or analyze. Character observation was not his pursuit save in cases where commercial interests were involved.

She had never spoken of the prince to him, he commented. It was quite possible, she answered, undisturbed. It had not occurred to her to do so.

"He has lost no time in following you." Tennant went on the comfortable principle of Bonaparte's beautiful sister as regarded the personality of servants. Beatrice was not so inclined to count their individuality wiped out with wages—still less their power of sight, hearing, and subsequent speech. The footman was still waiting.

"Will you go to the drawing-room?" she said to her father, by way of discouraging further observations for the present. She herself, she added, would follow as soon as she should have finished her letter. She turned and took up the pen she had laid aside.

Could the man speak any English? Tennant asked, rising from his leathern arm-chair. He was a trifle annoyed at her attitude. After all, this was a prince, and his arrival should not be treated as that of a next-door neighbor might be. If she were playing a part, she was overdoing it. If she were unaffected—then she was foolish.

Beatrice gave the assurance that the Italian's English was, if anything, more perfect than their own. She did not think it advisable to display the even slightly advanced degree of acquaintance which would have been implied by explaining that the proficiency was due to an English grandmother and an education

pursued during several years at Oxford. Her father marked his place in the swash-buckling and sentimental romance he had been enjoying, and went out of the library.

In the drawing-room he found something different from that which, with the self-made American's depreciation of blood at once noble and Latin, he had half expected. He would have been prepared for a man a good deal the same in type as the organ-grinder who frequently waylaid him in front of his office, or for a withered individual who had dissipated the little strength left to the scion of an outworn line. Valerio was neither. He was possibly thirty or a little more; he looked an athlete; he was handsome rather after the Anglo-Saxon conception of rugged-cast features; and he was dark, but not extremely so.

Tennant went through the formalities of greeting without betraying unduly the satisfaction he felt at receiving in his house the bearer of a princely title. His daughter, he told Valerio, was momentarily detained in the library, but would join them at once. Then, taking his place upon a gilt and brocade settee, he opened the conversation as he conceived it to be appropriate.

"I have spent some time in your country, Prince," he said. "I was there for the best part of a Spring three years ago."

He himself when he had been in Italy had welcomed

every opportunity to talk of his own land with whosoever offered — had indeed, to that end, missed many opportunities which appealed to him less, such as visits to galleries and palaces, churches, and historic scenes and edifices. At a table in some caffè, on the veranda of some hotel, he had passed his most agreeable Italian hours, in company with any compatriot of chance or old acquaintance to whom, not the Goth and Vandal invasions, but that of the American product was actually important.

It was therefore to be taken that Valerio, himself for the nonce an expatriate, would have pleasure in discussing Italy. He made a suitable answer now. And Tennant went on. Italy to him meant a national financial regeneration and the commercial revival of a people dead almost to decay. It was certainly not Valerio's common viewpoint, which rather gave backward over the centuries than upon the present or immediate future. But he adapted himself to it, and displayed information more exact and wide than Tennant's own. He wished to stand well with this American. For he hoped to marry his daughter.

The two men took estimates of each other the while they talked. Tennant saw an agreeable man still in robust youth, who was probably in search of a fortune — any fortune. So far as it went it was already partially incorrect. That which is known as keen American insight does not cast a light into the depths of the

complicated natures produced by centuries of cultivation and aristocratic training. It is reflected upon the very surface by too many facets.

Valerio was not in search of *any* fortune. That financial regeneration of the peninsula, upon which Tennant was prone to look hopefully, had not as yet greatly benefited the Valerio estates. But Valerio himself was far from destitute, having inherited from his mother. As an individual he was not and would, in all likelihood, never be poor. His ancestral domains, however, were beginning to show neglect. Those with their historical and sentimental treasures were more to him than could be any possible consideration save his self-respect. And this he did not feel that he would injure by such a marriage as he proposed for himself. He would have been glad to have been able to bestow rather than exchange, but as selling himself he did not for a moment consider it. Without unseemly self-esteem he knew himself to be a man whom a woman might both love and trust with her welfare. He could give to a wife titles which were not to be despised as empty — filled as they were with honor and associations — a name which, judged by the standards of the centuries through which it had passed, was a good as well as great one. Moreover, he had no intention of marrying without at least affection upon his own part. During the time of his visit to the New World many women had tacitly proposed themselves or

been proposed for his notice, women — not a few — of wealth greater than might be counted upon to go with Alan Tennant's daughter. Yet he had found repugnant the idea of making any one of them the mistress over his well-beloved estates, the mother of children who would be descended from his illustrious forbears, inheriting upon his side splendid and admirable traditions. He was not sordid. No riches could have paid him to deliberately undertake spending his life with a woman whose presence would be a constant mortification of the soul. Then, too, in numerous cases the parents of the girls who had been set forth for his choice had seemed to him to present atavistic possibilities appalling to contemplate.

With Tennant, so far as he could judge by hearsay and by this first glance, the objection did not present itself. He knew the man's personal history, knew that, though now the possessor of millions, he had been, not much over a quarter century before, a son of nobody and a workingman. Yet that same humor-gifted Fortune which had given to Valerio's own father a build and face worthy the heaviest peasant upon the estates, had willed it that this American of unrecorded paternity should look the offspring from a long line. It was possible to imagine, without revulsion, Alan Tennant as the grandsire of children bearing the Valerio names, to foresee him in Valerio palaces and castles, without a sense of outraged congruity. Had it

not been indeed men of just such characteristics, just such energies — though differently directed in accordance with a different age — who had founded the Valerio family in time gone by, in the midst of a society in process of formation as was the present American one? Tennant, hardly yet in middle age, spare, straight, iron-gray, was in no respect plebeian — even in those hands which usually told the tale but here were no betrayers. The mental type also was too direct, circumscribed, forceful, devoid of pretence, to be vulgar.

Upon the whole Valerio was well satisfied that Tennant spoke of the financial and business Italy, and did not make an attempt which would have been cheapening to simulate a comprehension of its art and traditions. He felt admiration for the successful American. And he felt something of pity too, as a man in possession of all five senses might for another having only one or two. Let Fate take from himself all but the bare means of livelihood, and his powers of enjoyment, his resources for happiness, would still be manifold. But for Alan Tennant, without either wealth or the chance of amassing it, existence would hold nothing. By that universal foot-rule he himself remained incalculably the better man.

And then, when a footman held back the portières at the farther end of the room, he rose and remained standing. As Beatrice Tennant came in, the inward vision which had let him see her father in palace halls

showed him the portrait of this young woman in place beside those of his ancestors' wives. Such a canvas might well perpetuate her as she advanced now, — the fawn color of her hair, the pale gold of her dress against the deeper Indian yellow draperies in the doorway. What American writer was it who, he recalled, held that the stamp of origin was not to be effaced? Here was the refutation.

After what Valerio had come to accept as the all but invariable custom of the land, Tennant presently withdrew upon a pretext which it was possible to accept as valid. He himself stayed for fully an hour thereafter. And Beatrice, too, spoke to him of his own country. But he could see from the first that it meant much to her which it did not mean to either Tennant or himself. To Tennant it was the rich and the makers of riches; to him it was the great and the makers of greatness; to her it was those who were neither rich nor great — the people. He felt that their acquaintance did not justify him in trying to put the conversation upon too personal a basis, as he would have liked to do in order to go below the surface of a nature singularly reticent. She had apparently, however, an ordinary knowledge of Roman and Italian history and a mind to which history is more than dates and independent events. By learning those happenings and characters which interested her most, he believed that he would be able to draw accurate conclusions

regarding herself, her tastes and sympathies. And he felt that they would be worth knowing.

Presently he was able to surmise that not the dogs in their palace but the prisoners in the dungeons across the bridge appealed to her, — that those were her favorites among the artists who had been of humble birth and had battled against obstacles. And it was no one of the three exemplars of superior humanity, Crassus, Cæsar, nor even Marcus Aurelius, who was her hero. He permitted himself comment upon this much, adding, “It is, I should be inclined to say, Rienzi.” “It is Rienzi,” she told him. She was not impetuous. Save for the meaning behind the eyes which were almost the same light fawn brown as the hair, he would hardly have given her credit for enthusiasms. Outwardly she was, as he had seen before, very self-contained for so young a woman. “Even,” — he could not forbear from questioning, “—even the man who tried to make himself so drunk with display and pomp as to forget his beginnings?” She answered with the excuse of that final phase, that possibly the effort to raise and better the masses, to inspire them with some of one’s own ambition, was calculated to bring about either flaccid indifference at the last, or else reaction into the existence of a tyrant or a sybarite.

He himself came from a line which had small sympathy with any such effort, which had more than once suffered at the hands of the people or of those

risen from them. Yet the daughter of an erstwhile workingman found him better able to enter into her ideas than many in whom the class bond might have been expected to create also a bond of comprehension.

In the days, now five years past, when she had come back from a French convent and had begun to take charge of certain charities for her father, to interest herself in conditions around her, — almost new again to a great deal that she had to see, — she had spoken openly.

The surprise, amusement, or hardly hidden annoyance with which she had been met had taught her to keep silence thereafter, before her world, upon any but the most impersonal, innocuous topics.

Valerio had led her to abandon her reserve, and she was conscious of being regretful when the footman again held back the curtains and announced Durran.

Valerio went away almost at once, after having told Beatrice that he would be for some days in the city. And the curtains had barely dropped together behind him when Durran, for his part not objecting to directness or to asking point-blank that which he wished to know, inquired respecting him. Beatrice answered his questions.

“Is he, too, going to want to marry you?” Durran finished the catechism.

She smiled, raising her eyebrows a trifle.

"He is a dilatory person, perhaps," she said. "I have known him several weeks, have met him three or four times, and seen him in my own house once—yet he has not signified his intentions."

"He will," he said decisively. "You may trust him not to run any unnecessary risks."

Durran himself made no secret of his wish to marry Beatrice Tennant. One refusal upon her part had not discouraged him. And he could have the comfortable knowledge that his suit was hardly—like that of many another—to be ascribed to mercenary motives. He was not so rich as Tennant, but he was well on the road to becoming so. Moreover, though he had begun his working life as a water boy at the Staunton plant, he was of good birth, and had behind him a family which even yet only reluctantly admitted Tennant to acquaintance.

Pending the acceptance as a lover which he continued to hope for, he was willing to remain on the footing of very good friendship that Beatrice encouraged.

He talked now, for a time, about various indifferent and trivial matters. "It was not all this I came to say, though," he interrupted himself in the midst of some trivialities. "It was something concerning a friend of yours,—that young Manning, by whom you and the Rev. Mr. Lester swear, I believe."

"Is he promoted?" she questioned.

"No," answered Durran, "I regret to say that he is not. On the contrary, he is discharged. He," reiterated Durran, "and several others, with more to follow, very possibly. Your father has told you nothing of it?"

"No," she said, "nothing."

It was rarely Tennant's custom to speak to her of anything connected with the conduct of his affairs. Durran, however, saw no reason why she should not hear of this. It was one of her advantages as a friend that she kept things to herself. And, in any case, the news would be common property by morning.

"What," Beatrice asked, "has Manning done — or neglected?"

Durran undertook to explain at some length. There had of late arisen in the minds of the managers a suspicion that an attempt was being made to unionize the men at Staunton and other of the company's plants. To permit this, being contrary to the definite policy, it was proposed to nip any such tendency in the bud. "To which end," said Durran, "there were hired for service at the various mills certain detectives. Apparently the most successful is a scallywag named Clement, whose duties are at Staunton. He does not have to resort to the ancient and pretty generally suspected method of hanging around bar-rooms and street corners. He knows the work. Some years ago he used to be a shearman, I believe — of the snow-

bird variety, probably, only standing turn when winter drove him to it." Durran, warming to his subject, leaned forward and threw his arm over the back of his chair—an exceedingly fragile example of furniture in the style of Louis the Fourteenth, belonging properly enough, perhaps, to the period of the *Precieux*, but having little fitness with that of the man of affairs.

"Clement's occupation," he went on, "has been to spy for and report any tendency toward union sentiments in the men. He works inside the plant, and outside there is a girl named Laura Halloran—another bad lot—who is in love with him and is supposed to help him. They manage it together by methods best known to themselves. Well," he concluded, "Manning had been under suspicion for some time anyway. Now he has joined the union. And when he comes off turn to-morrow morning he will be informed that his services are to be dispensed with."

Beatrice was silent for a time. Then she expressed a doubt as to the probable efficacy of the method. Durran acquiesced. He shrugged his shoulders with a gesture of indifference. "It is not in history to the best of my knowledge," he said, "that such ways of checking popular causes are successful. And it is a popular cause—as well as an inevitable effect. These men—who are liked, I am told—are pretty sure to be

looked upon as martyrs. And you know the effect ascribed to the blood of those."

Beatrice sat in thought, a row of even teeth pressing upon her under lip, her brow frowning. "Whatever he has done," she said at last, "I think he has done because he saw it as his duty."

"Possibly," answered Durran, without much conviction. "The superintendent of that department thinks, however, that it is because he has the labor-leader bee in his bonnet and is a restless sort of Lucifer who prefers reigning in hell to serving in heaven. I," he disclaimed personal bias, "am not prepared to judge. I don't know him. I inquired about him once because he struck my eye as a fine specimen of a man. They told me he was studying along the lines of mechanics and metallurgy, and had already devised a couple of minor inventions, which he had patented. But I was also told that he had union leanings, so I had not much expectation of his advancement."

Later, after Durran had gone, Beatrice went up to her own sitting-room. It had more the look of being lived in than any other part of the big house—which was in point of fact hardly fairly inhabited. Herself and her father were the only inmates, save for the score of servants relegated to one semi-detached end. Yet even here where Beatrice spent really a good portion of her time, there was nothing about which seemed to cling any further associations than those of

easy purchase. The pictures, the furniture, every one of the useful articles or ornaments, might have been bought—given a sufficiently full purse—in a few days.

As in the whole house, the present inmates might have gone out and others have come in and the surroundings would have borne no more personal relation to one owner than to another. It was a lack to which Tennant himself was not sensitive. He had, four years previously, at the time the house had been completed, hired an expensive decorator to furnish for him. Everything had cost money and plenty of it. It must therefore be good, and he was satisfied. Beatrice felt the want of something more than costliness and the taste of a hireling. Those things which money never buys and which make of a house a home were not in the white granite palace,—those things which have so irresistible an attraction for one's individual wish or fancy that they have to be acquired, even at the price of some slight sacrifice of lesser inclinations, or else the inanimate objects which have grown into one's life from long association, from long habit and use.

In Beatrice Tennant's life there had been almost no time intervening between that one where she had had practically nothing, and the more recent one where she had had too much. In Staunton, when her father had still lived and worked there, in the boarding-house

which had followed, in the New York school and the Parisian convent which had come after that, she had owned only necessities. In the past half decade she had bought all manner of things without having to give a thought to cost. Another woman with the same fortune at her disposal, with the same good, though not eclectic taste, would have had much of what filled Beatrice's bedroom and sitting-room to overflowing. It was only the almost unvarying yellows, creams, gold and tans which she affected in all that surrounded her, even to her dress, that bespoke an individual choice. That, and the books. There were many of these, and they were by no means the regulation English and foreign classics. They gave evidence of a mind not guided by precedent, liking strong food as well as lighter, one upon the whole more modern and practical than of the past or dreaming. She tried now to read one of the books. It was the *Jack* of Daudet, and it lay open at a description of that most pathetic boy-figure of all fiction, at work in the foundry at Indret. But the story set her to thinking of another boy, one whom she had known, and who had worked in the Staunton plant. She had been a friend of Manning's then, when they had both been children of the same age. Mrs. Manning, deserted by her husband, had been obliged to support herself and her one child. She had done sewing and made dresses for the workmen's

wives,—a not badly paying occupation, since those had been the times of wages so high that the skilled men could clothe their wives well. The boy had helped, nevertheless, by selling papers, and, an independent spirit developing young, had, at twelve years old, gone regularly at steadier work. Beatrice and he had played together during their earliest childhood and, though more and more rarely, until Tenant had ceased to live in Staunton and had come across the river to the city. Beatrice had been, soon after, sent to school in New York, and then to the French convent. She had heard nothing of her old playmate and had almost forgotten him. No one had let her know of it when Mrs. Manning died. Manning was a workingman. She was the daughter of a managing director in a great and important company. Then she had left the convent and had, at the beginning of her eighteenth year, come back to live with her father. Besides taking charge, at her own request, of some of the charities he practised, she had turned to helping Lester, the young and practical rector at Staunton, with some of his work for the moral and social betterment of the parish. She had found Neil Manning already doing the same in his rare hours of leisure, and she had seen that he and Lester were exceedingly good friends, regardless of the difference in birth and station. Yet between himself and her Manning had insisted upon keeping a gulf of reserve.

And he had never allowed her to succeed in bridging it. With Lester he was merely another man; with her he was her father's employee and clearly wished to remain just that.

She left her chair, and putting the book down upon a tabouret went over to a window which looked toward the west. As she stood there the thin chime of a little clock struck eleven times. Another clock somewhere in another room struck also, very deliberately and sonorously. A third began before the second had finished. It was muffled by distance. Then there was the quiet of the Spring night again,—but not the darkness.

Over across the roofs of the city houses, beyond the river, in one of the plants belonging to her father's company, or some other, a blast furnace top opened, and the stars paled away. The leaves of the trees in the big grounds about the house glinted, the chimneys against the sky line were silhouetted black. The light grew less and less, and left once more the deep sky and the stars,—bright here above the city, but blurred by the thick atmosphere of the smoke settled over the works. In those works men were standing over ladles of seething steel, above fiery soaking pits, under the converter's pouring sparks, in the fetid vapors that rose from the salt and water dropped on white-hot steel at the rolls, in the terrible crashing and bursting thunder which never ceased.

She thought of Manning as he had been in the yards outside the open-hearth building, alone in the gloom which was filled with the puffings of engines, the rattling of wheels, the roar from rolling-mills, the shriek of saws, alone under the smoke which misted steam and clung low in the dead air. She remembered the face which the glare from the converter had showed, the big corded throat, the breast, again bared, and the sinewy arms hanging straight down. She looked back at her own room, in the light of an amber-shaded lamp, fragrant with narcissus and daffodils in bowls and vases.

That over there where the blast furnace had lit the heavens, was Manning's life. This — through no merit or exertion of her own — was hers.

CHAPTER III

Mais les apparances sont les faits et les illusions sont les puissances qui produisent des actions réelles et considérables.

But appearances are the facts and illusions are the powers which produce real and important actions. — LAVISSE.

“OF such stuff national well-being and the glory of rulers is made,” adapted Manning. He was on the wide terrace of the hospital building which was at the top of a hill above Staunton. The name of Tennant was cut deep and large over the portals for all to read. Tennant had given the hospital, and there were those who held that his bushels were in requisition for other purposes than extinguishing the light of his benefactions. His good works shone before men.

Manning had observed the spread name as he had gone up the steps, and had had thoughts not a little cynical. Now, coming out again, though he stood just below it, he forgot it. The triviality of cynicism was neither common with him, nor yet congruous. And it had no place after the gravity of the approaching death he had just been looking upon. It had been that of a young Swede, a laborer in the same department with himself.

Toward morning there had come about an accident at the mills, due to the carelessness of a crane-man.

In the plants under Tennant's charge it was rare that an accident was the result of the owner's neglect. Tennant's machinery was kept in repair, even though the high pressure of production had, at intervals, to be relaxed,—an example which many other mills in the vicinity might have followed to the saving of lives. This present mishap, which had cost two men, had happened close upon the end of the night turn. It was usually near the end of shifts that accidents occurred, when the men were overtired after the long strain. Upon this occasion the throwing of a wrong controller lever by a crane-man, dazed with eleven and a half hours of faculties intensely upon the stretch, had resulted in spilling a half ladle of molten steel.

A Polish laborer had been killed at once. The Swede, Steinberg, had been less fortunate. He was still living after three hours of hideous, incredible suffering.

In the gray dawn Manning had seen the whole catastrophe, had seen the Pole—stupidly where he did not belong—deluged from head to foot by the liquid fire, and Steinberg caught with the lapping white flame about his feet. He had heard the shrieks as the Swede had fallen forward upon his side before it was possible to drag him out.

After that, within the hour he had been notified of

his own dismissal, which, by the men's contract with the company, could be immediate under the circumstances. He had gone back to his room, bathed, and dressed, had taken a cup of coffee at his boarding-house, and then come directly to the hospital. He had found Steinberg begging and imploring for his wife. "Don't let her come," he himself had urged the physician; "there is to be a child soon. She ought not to see this." But the wife, who had finally heard of the accident, had arrived and almost forced her way to the bedside of the cruelly tortured and disfigured man. Manning had been able to endure the sight of the young Swede's pain. That of the wife—hardly more than a sweet, blond child—had made him turn after a few moments and leave the room. She had screamed and fainted, and waking screamed again, absolutely without courage or fortitude. His nerves were quivering and sick yet, as he stepped out upon the terrace and drew in long breaths of the early morning air. The shock of the accident to this mere boy whom he had liked had kept him from thinking of his own dismissal. Now, however, it recurred to him. He was a discharged workingman, a wage-earner without a job, one of the unemployed. In view of the general strike all over the country he was likely to remain so for some time to come. From his sixth year until now he had worked and earned, and been never a day in want of a position. At present he was cast off without an hour's warning.

It was a practically inevitable contingency though, which he had foreseen upon becoming a member of the association. Tennant's attitude toward union men was too well known to admit of misunderstanding. If they were his own, they were discharged. If they wished to become so, they were not employed. A conflict of serious nature between misguided union labor and the directors of the Staunton plant, which had taken place some years back, had dictated the policy. And Manning, who knew the history of that event, and had himself been in Staunton at the time, could not but find plenty of justification for the company.

Yet his long, stern mouth shut hard as he looked over Staunton. The mills covered acre after acre of ground far up the river, scores of dark-red sheds, some of them hundreds of feet long, set sidewise, crosswise, at all angles over the yards. The smoke hung gray and low above them. A hot, red flame showed just then from under the roof of his own open-hearth building. Engines leaving long rolls of smoke behind tore through the yards, pulling all but interminable trains of coke. The smaller yard engines, dragging their loads of fiery ingots puffed very slowly to and fro. A crane was moving evenly along its overhead tracks, with a couple of tiny shapes clinging to it,—workmen getting a ride. And always the thick smoke poured and rolled from countless stacks. Here and there it was an angry, brick red, and in other places

the steam from smaller stacks was white against it. A smoke-shrouded world—and angry fires within.

Between the plant and the hospital was an enclosure where some boys played already, practising the baseball for which Staunton was noted among the neighboring plants. They were in the recreation grounds of the town, a bare, dusty space inside a board fence.

Far beyond across the river were the hills with their newly green trees. The city was behind them, out of sight save for the higher-set buildings.

There rose over Staunton itself the spires of several churches. Upon two were gilded crosses which caught the early sunlight and glistened dazzlingly. The churches were in the worst part of the town, and Manning thought of the squalid, ugly streets above which the crosses shone, and where children teemed and swarmed. For the greatest part they were unlovely children, fit products of the life.

A life it was, none the less, which to himself was tremendous and real and of sombre dignity. In those long, dull sheds, just below, in all the others which lined the banks of the big, dirty river, in hundreds of the sort over the world, was being formed the steel skeleton around which the body of modern material civilization grew. A man might—as many did—hate this work here, and dread it. But at least it was not to be despised. It was the work of men. And now he had it no longer. Howbeit,—thanks to good

pay and habits of sobriety and thrift, — he was neither by any means destitute, nor likely to become so in the future. So long as his health and strength should last, he could never be in actual need. Weaker men, even though equally deserving, might be trampled under in the struggle for work, but such sheer physical power as was in his muscles of steel, directed by a clear head, could never be unhired in the market.

Yet as the cold, gray eyes under their straight and black brows rested on the roof of the shed in which he had been employed, there came in them a hardness which was the instinctive disguising of regret. His was of those natures, not by any means usually the least sentient, to which exploited sentiment is abhorrent.

A doctor came out upon the terrace and started to cross it. Then he saw Manning and turned, going over to him.

“Steinberg is dead,” he said.

Manning expressed himself as glad that the end had come.

“Yes,” agreed the doctor, “with a wage-earner in about any walk of life it is feeble mawkishness to wish him spared to live after any crippling accident.”

Manning, who had seen more than enough of the sickening misery of such survivals, nodded his head with decision. “And the wife?” he asked.

“Mercifully unconscious again. They have taken her into one of the wards. It is a pity,” the doctor added, “that there is to be a child. How can the birth of a posthumous child to the widow of a man who has been earning day-laborer’s wages be looked upon, even with any stretch of sentiment, as a blessing?”

He drew solace however from the probability that the company would follow its usual custom in cases of the sort, and come in with financial aid for the present.

He went off toward the house of one of the superintendents, and Manning took his own way along a path of black cinders leading to the lower part of the town. His feet crunched heavily, firmly. There was never indecision in his steps, not even now, when perhaps for the first time in his life he was without definite purpose. His head hung down and his face had settled into severe lines. Any one seeing him and chancing to know that he had been discharged would have put it down that he was brooding and angry over the loss of a position. It was only that, however, in so far as it presented itself in connection with another thing, — one the least likely of all others to have occurred to whosoever might have speculated, — which was that if he were to be obliged to leave Staunton he would see nothing more of Beatrice Tennant.

He put his arm out quickly to save from falling a

mite of a newsboy, in tiniest possible coat and nether garments, against whom he had run in his unseeing stride ahead. The little fellow's arm went up automatically, offering the journals he carried with the plaintive "Paper, Mister?" of his kind. Manning shook his head abstractedly, and went on. He himself had been, not a score of years before, just such an one as this youngster, selling papers around the same town, then a dirty, wretched collection of crazy shacks and tenements. And that had been in the days when he had sometimes played with another child of his own age — Tennant's daughter, over whom his mother was given charge during the hours of the father's absence. Though Beatrice was motherless, Tennant had seen to it that she was not neglected. He had been strict with her, keeping her out of the streets and early discouraging friendships with the workmen's children and families.

Manning, thinking of this and many other not unrelated things, was brought back to the present by hearing himself spoken to. Four or five men were standing together on the sidewalk, and one of them, whose name was Lockhart, had called him. They were in front of a restaurant and cigar-stand, which was kept by a woman known as Mrs. Halloran, though Halloran himself was a fact of the past, whose existence and demise had to be taken upon her word. Mrs. Halloran's daughter, a not unattractive girl, thin, black-

haired, and blue-eyed, and of obviously slatternly habits, usually tended the cigar-stand. She was there now, seated on a high stool behind the counter and busy with a piece of crocheting. Lockhart motioned to Manning to join him and the others. He was a tall, loose-jointed, big-boned fellow of about thirty, by occupation a roller, and among those who had that morning been discharged from the mills. Beside him was a man who had come into Staunton recently, but was not employed at the plant and had no apparent occupation. Manning, who had met him before, nevertheless knew him to be what he was, an organizer sent by the union, but who was not yet ready to openly declare himself.

Immediately upon Manning's joining the group the organizer proposed that the six of them go to the saloon at the corner for the discussion of certain matters becoming of increasing importance. It was something to Lockhart's surprise that Manning did not refuse. He knew it not to be the latter's habit to frequent the bar-rooms in Staunton. But though Manning had agreed to come into this one, insistence upon the part of the union envoy could not make him drink. Was it against his principles? the man asked, with the humoring half-contempt commonly in the question.

"Not at a later hour of the day," said Manning, briefly and good-humoredly. The organizer, possessed of the natural gift for knowing his man which had

made him successful in his line of work, refrained from following it up. Lockhart laughed shortly and with a note not pleasing to Manning.

The other proceeded directly to the business he had on hand, — plans of campaign for unionizing the plant. It was evident that he had already been over them with Lockhart and at least two of the men at the table, and further, that he had to a certain extent constituted the roller a lieutenant. He had a system of picketing and missionary work mapped out, whereby all the steel workers were to be approached and persuaded into joining the union. He had, too, already arranged it so completely to his own satisfaction that Manning should take a leader's part in the work, that he failed at first to read the indication of the silence which met him.

"Now we can count on you in this?" — he put it confidently.

"I am afraid not," answered Manning.

Lockhart laughed shortly again, and the organizer looked his blank surprise. He had been at pains to find out who were the men likely to be useful, to take an active hand, and to command a following, and Manning had been particularly designated.

"No?" he asked, thrown out of his calculations by the sudden and totally unexpected check where he had looked for furthering enthusiasm, — for was not this man one of the first accessions, and perhaps the most important? "No? But why not?"

"Well," said Manning, deliberately, "principally because I'd have sent about his business pretty quick anybody who had come interfering with me and trying to make me act in his way. I'll have to give others the same liberty I'd have stood for in my own case." But had not Manning been brought over himself? "Not by having anybody hunt me up or follow me around," he answered, with a slow smile at the thought of what the result of some one's doing so might have been.

"Then what —" began the organizer, and hesitated.

"What did bring me over?" Manning helped him out. "Well, I looked into it; and when I wanted to know anything, I went and asked. If any of the men want to know anything, they can come to me and ask. I'll tell them. I think I can give them good reasons for joining us. It had to be good ones that would convert me. Or," he added, "I'll speak in public whenever you want me to. I've had some practice at that sort of thing in political meetings."

Lockhart suggested with running interjections of unimpassioned profanity that the ranks of the unions would never be swelled to formidable proportions if the common attitude were that which Manning saw fit to take.

The organizer, fearful of the effect Lockhart's tone might have upon Manning's temper, interposed more persuasively that not every man was capable of forming his own ideas, nor yet had the time to give for doing

so. "There has got to be missionary work done," he reasoned.

"Certainly,"—Manning granted it willingly and with conviction,—"but I am not cut out to do it."

Lockhart, all of whose latent meanness a glass of the spirits which he rarely took could be trusted to bring upon the surface, gave the curt, sneering laugh once again, and unmindful of the look coming upon Manning's face, uttered some sarcasms which lost the fineness of their edge in the heat of his exasperation. "What *are* you cut out for, Neil?" he finished, growing altogether reckless in enjoyment of his own wit. "To loaf around with psalm-singing ministers and sit up and fetch and carry for old Tennant's daughter in hopes she'll put him on to giving you a raise?"

When he stopped, he was a little dismayed at the effect of his words. Manning was looking at him steadily, with eyes which had grown bleak gray beneath the straight line of brows. Very slowly he pushed his chair a little away from the table and turned around until he faced Lockhart.

"If that is meant to be funny, you had better say so now," he advised, "and then — never repeat it."

Lockhart, who had, in point of fact, intended it for malicious humor, and had not reckoned upon the consequence, was, nevertheless, not inclined to be brought to account in this fashion. He was innocent of any

suspicion that to have handled Beatrice Tennant's name without respect was his real offence, and there did not seem to him sufficient cause for Manning's sudden and black anger. His lip rose at one side in a smile which had the unfortunate effect of a sneer. He had a reputation for being not only unafraid of a fight, but ready to court one, and his prowess with the huge fists at the ends of his long, loose-hung arms was his standing boast. As a consequence, he was not willing to back down if he could make Manning seem to do so. But Manning had got up from his chair, carefully put it back at the table, as one who does all things decently and in order, and now he went around beside him. No one had yet offered to interfere. They were not pleasant to tamper with, these two men, each giving, in a different way, the impression of a deadly strength.

"Well?" demanded Manning. His voice was so low that the word could be better guessed than heard.

Lockhart still calculated. He thought of fighting. But he was not keen to do it, — not unless there should be something in it, or unless he were himself more enraged than he was now. At present he was too cool to feel like plunging into blows, and he was at a disadvantage in having remained seated. Manning, standing above him and close, had to be looked up to. Lockhart hesitated only an instant longer; then, as he felt on his shoulder the grip of a hand heavy and strong as iron, he saved his bravado with an outburst

of curses, in tenor a request to be told what manner of fool Manning might be that he could not take a friend's joke. The hand was lifted from his shoulder.

"That will do," said Manning, in a level voice, which was far from amicable yet, however. "But don't try that particular joke again."

Lockhart tried to turn the laugh against Manning as thin-skinned, but without success. The latter went back to his chair, and after a few minutes more of desultory discussion upon union matters the unofficial meeting broke up. Lockhart and the organizer went off together, and Manning kept on to the red-brick house where he had his room.

CHAPTER IV

Pour les peuples, comme pour les individus, la chance du développement le plus varié, le plus complet, la chance d'un progrès dans toutes les directions, et d'un progrès indéfini, cette chance compense à elle seule, tout ce qu'il peut coûter pour avoir le droit de la courir.

For a people, as for individuals, the chance for the most varied and complete development, the chance to progress in all directions, and to progress indefinitely — this chance in itself alone, compensates for all that it may cost to have the right to take it.

—GUIZOT. *Histoire de la Civilisation en Europe.*

LATER in the day, Manning betook himself to the house of Kemble, an Englishman, who until that morning had been a heater at the mills, but was now among those discharged. The house was in one of the better streets, — an ugly little two-story affair of brick and drab-painted wood, redeemed to some extent by the garden in front of it. From early spring until late in the autumn, Kemble, working in the yard at spare moments, kept it one of the most attractive spots in Staunton, — a patch of sweet-scented early blossoms or of gorgeous late color, which even the soot could not entirely dull.

Kemble's wife opened the door. She led Manning into the small parlor, close-smelling and almost dark.

The curtains she put up, but the windows remained closed, to the discomfort of Manning, who had a predilection for fresh air. Kemble came shuffling down the stairs with indeterminate footfalls, the suggestion of which was added to by as indeterminate a cough at almost regular intervals. His work had brought on its frequent result, and the cough and his hollow-chested, gaunt figure foretold that his days could hardly be many more. He had already reached his fiftieth year, but his beard was gray and he looked much older than he was. His young and very handsome wife was held to have a good chance—not too remote—of freedom from the irksome affection of an elderly husband whom she unmistakably did not cherish.

Mrs. Kemble had spoken at once of her husband's discharge from the mills, and she had kept to the subject, evidently much disturbed by the event. But Kemble's first question was for Steinberg.

"He is dead," Manning reported. "He died early this morning."

Kemble stroked his square beard and coughed mournfully. "It is too bad," he said, "too bad. And is there," he asked, "a wife—or children?"

Manning told him.

"Then Tennant will probably have her looked after—and the child, when it comes?" Kemble's speech usually took the form of questions. He was not asser-

tive or definite. "Tennant—" he went on, voicing the simple wisdom which, in spite of his mental timidity, gave his words weight among his fellow-workmen—"Tennant is one of them as will give four times over in charity what he won't agree, if he can help himself, to letting any one have as a right. He founds a hospital, but he won't run three turns. And he keeps an accident fund very likely bigger than the one he uses at the legislature to stop the adoption of a practical employer's liability act."

Tennant's proceedings at the state capital were hardly a secret.

"It makes you feel a better fellow to give a man a dollar than a prerogative," he added musingly. After all, though, he asked, dubious of his judgment as possibly too severe on Tennant, had it not been the crane-man's fault—the accident?

The crane-man had thrown the wrong switch Manning agreed, and his decisive manner of speech was in marked contrast to that of the heater.

"But he was just out of the hospital, and he had been at work eleven and a half hours, poor devil. When he saw the accident, he went all to pieces. They had to get him out of the cage and away from the mill. He was in a bad state." Manning was not afraid of passing severe judgment. And he did so now.

"The man who works his employees twelve hours

out of twenty-four is morally responsible for the accidents they cause at the end of shifts."

Some one came up the garden walk and rang the bell. Going to the door was not in the list of duties of the little servant whom the Kembles kept, though it was a work of supererogation which she sometimes took upon herself. At present, perhaps because she foresaw impending dismissal in view of Kemble's loss of work, she showed no intention of answering the ring. It came again. Mrs. Kemble sat where she was, her handsome face expressing nothing, not even that she heard. Kemble glanced at her with mild interrogation, then rose, coughing, and shuffled out of the room. Mrs. Kemble had been silent ever since he had come down, her pale blue eyes watching Manning from under their heavy white lids. Now she spoke. It was again of her husband's discharge. She seemed to take it hard, to look forward with angry dread to the probability of a long period during which no wages would come in. Kemble was out of the room for some time, and Manning found himself obliged to talk to her while he waited.

Though he was a friend of her husband's, he did not like Mrs. Kemble. Possibly, indeed, it was exactly because he *was* Kemble's friend, and could not but resent the wife's attitude toward the good old man who humbly adored her.

But indifference is apt to be a vacuum into which

affection rushes, and Mrs. Kemble had already showed a readiness to be less cold to Manning than she was to her lawful master. Manning had not been oblivious to the fact. He rarely troubled to look at her; but he was aware, nevertheless, that she watched him untiringly from the thin, cold streak of blue which usually represented her eyes. Since he had begun to observe it, he had gone less frequently than usual to Kemble's home. Mrs. Kemble spoke of this now in her low, distinct voice, which was always in the same tone, even as the handsome face with its regular, classic features was always in the same expression.

"I have been working twelve hours a day, going to night classes three times a week and reading, writing, and studying most of the other four nights," he told her, stating facts rather than seeming to offer a justification. He chose to make no reference to having kept enough leisure to be with Lester now and then, or to go for long tramps into the country upon his free Sundays—since, despite his friendship with the clergyman, he did not frequent the church.

"You must not study too hard," Mrs. Kemble said, and it was not her voice which betrayed anxiety for him; it was the quick quiver of a corner of her mouth—less controlled than were the other muscles of the face, framed in its mass of dull red hair, parted down over the ears.

Manning smiled. It had not seemed to hurt him;

he put it by. But it was an unfortunate speech, for it drew her eyes to him, made her realize afresh his youth and strength. And the eyes, small and only half opened though they were, grew intense with feeling.

"I have read all you have written," she said. The repression could be felt as something almost tangible.

There were papers and magazines of no very considerable circulation, which concerned themselves chiefly with economic or mechanical questions, to which he contributed from time to time. He had no more faith in Mrs. Kemble's mental ability than he had in that of most women. "You must have found it dry reading then," he told her carelessly.

Whether or no she was repulsed by his persistent refusal to respond to the feeling which for the first time had evidently all but mastered her, he could not tell, for Kemble came back into the room. And presently he himself went away.

He had some business to attend to in the city, and he went down to the corner beyond the Kemble house to take the car. As he rode, he thought of the dangerous frame of mind into which the woman was working herself. He did not like it. He was Kemble's friend, and, moreover, he feared she would be difficult to manage. Though he disliked her, she was too handsome to be altogether repellent. The magnificent in form and color had its effect upon him.

Years of familiarity with the splendor of the hot metals and fire displays in the mills had not dulled his pleasure in them. A thorough understanding of all the hard, calculating meanness of Mrs. Kemble's character did not counteract the fact that she was beautiful, with an opulent, sheer physical beauty which made him wonder sometimes what might be the Oriental or far southern strain in her blood. And there was a drawing power, of a kind, in her self-repression and taciturnity. Its very force told the possible recklessness beneath. She was decidedly a good person to avoid.

He put her out of his mind forthwith, and then fell after a time to thinking again, as he had that morning, as he habitually did, of another woman, in every respect the reverse of Mrs. Kemble.

When he had been only a boy of nineteen, in years, though already a man in point of maturity and build, Beatrice Tennant had first come into his life as an influence. It was true that he had known her as a child and playmate ; but he had, in the time between then and her return from school, to all intents forgotten her. In the meanwhile she had changed from a little girl only fairly pretty to a young woman, still with no real beauty, but with a grace and charm of manner beyond the ordinary. He had been thrown with her, in a way which could not otherwise have been, at the classes and clubs that Lester ran for the benefit of any one in

Staunton who chose to profit by them — regardless of creed or lack thereof. When he had been on night-turns and so at leisure for part of the day, he had not infrequently given the clergyman a helping hand with the boys and young men. Beatrice was the assistant with the women. And there was a class of small children which both he and she had often managed together. Lester's house was also a settlement building upon a small scale, and it was there the clubs usually met.

Almost from the first he had had to admit to himself that the thing of all others which he would have wished to avoid had befallen him. He had come to love, with all the force of the imaginative and ideal which can be in the elemental nature, this girl who could never by any possibility descend to him.

From Lester he had learned and profited by much which no books — and certainly none of his other associates — could have taught him. Not with the flexibility of a weak character, but with the determination of a strong one, he had adapted himself to the ways of Lester's personal habits, actions, and speech. He had even to an extent observed and copied the essentials of the latter's dress, for the clergyman did not wear the clerical garb. As a consequence, he was outwardly superior even among an already superior class of workmen, and there were many among the mill owners who were far from being his equal. He knew this.

Yet he knew, too, that no villein of feudal days could have been farther removed from the daughter of his liege lord than was he himself from Beatrice Tennant. A matter of a half-dozen years, a matter of great wealth, had separated them so completely that for her to have loved him would have been stooping to a peculiarly unpleasant disgrace. He had indulged himself in some little consideration of the nature of a democracy wherein such could be the fact. But that it was a fact he accepted.

"When you marry —" had said Lester to him, upon one occasion.

"I will not marry," he had answered. And Lester, who never treated him as a boy, did not display incredulity at that final decision of a youth of one-and-twenty.

In the ambitious plans he had had for advancing there had never been any thought of his being enabled thereby to raise himself to Beatrice. He had known that by the time he should have reached a position even distantly approaching such an one as she could share, she would, to a certainty, be already married. Yet he had meant, nevertheless, to advance — and that here, in the company. It was with the end steadily in view that he had set himself to study along the lines of his work and had managed to obtain opportunities for practical experiment in mechanics and metallurgy. It had taken self-denial of many sorts —

even that of the sleep and rest his brain and body ached for after long hours of hard toil ; but he had had as encouragement the example of almost every member of the company, comparatively young men all of them, and all worth large fortunes. They had, without exception, risen from the lowest places in the different plants, and though generally not from the sphere of the skilled workman, yet such were not necessarily debarred.

Then, upon a day unlucky for such ambitions, his reading had turned in the direction of the history and aims of trades-unions. He had not taken it up with any idea of a possible conversion, merely in a desire to know something regarding what was probably the most vital question of the times—and like most vital questions, the most beset with difficulties in the way of judgment. Until then he had been, indeed, rather inclined to share the company's prejudice against the association of workingmen. He had looked upon it, at best, as good only for such as expected to remain in the labor ranks to the end of their days. For himself, he had preferred to keep his personal independence—to work or refuse to work for whom or for what he should see fit, and to subscribe to no code which made for the individual's bondage to obtain a class freedom.

As he had read, however, the long record of achievement against almost hopeless odds, of betterment and education, the theories underlying it all had struck

him as tenable. Then they had appealed to his sense of logic and justice, which was not to be biased by the fact that there had been connected with the movement — sometimes seemingly inseparable from it — much of the violence and fanaticism, much of the rabid insistence upon letter and ignoring of spirit, from which no great world movement, certainly not Christianity itself, had been exempt.

He had realized that he was forming convictions which, if lived up to, must put an end to all his present plans. He began to see it as very little creditable to himself that he profited in all his daily life from wages and conditions obtained so hardly by adherents to the very cause he turned his back upon. And at length he had talked over the whole subject with Lester. The latter had held before him what it must mean for him to join the association of his trade, to identify himself with the class.

“I should say that if I did not,” he had answered, “I would be about on a par with a citizen of a country who accepts all the benefits of its government and protection, but refuses to help in the governing even by going to the polls or giving war service.”

Lester had urged union abuses. Manning dismissed it as the weakling complaint of the man who bemoans the maladministration of his town, and hugs himself for his virtue in keeping aloof from it, instead of throwing his force for the work of betterment. “Be-

sides," he added, "I am inclined to think, from what I can make of it, that labor riots would be worse without union influence. The percentage of violence in organized strikes is very small and growing smaller. The unions discourage it, theoretically and in fact. There was," he asserted, "a time in the history of unions when resort to force was justifiable — exactly as any other rebellions against oppression have been ; but the time has passed, and the best leaders know it."

"It will put an end to all your aspirations," Lester had warned.

"It ought not to — though I suppose it will," Manning had agreed. "But then, I have been forming others. To be a leader of the working classes need not be so poor an ambition after all. And it is at least as worthy as the one to simply get rich for riches' sake."

Then, had inquired Lester, it was his intention to lead?

"I mean to try to, certainly, unless good reasons turn up against it. It seems to me that giving labor right leading is a thing that needs to be done. It is an important part of the world's work which is pretty generally shirked. If I were to see something at the mills which wanted doing and was being neglected, I'd do it or see that it got done, not for love of the owners or the men, but because the thing was there to be attended to. It is about the way this question seems to me."

Lester had cautioned against being led away by the first enthusiastic impulse, and had obtained a promise of six months' delay before the taking of any definite step. It was to be remembered, too, he counselled, that the interests of labor could be worked for from the top even more effectually than from the bottom.

Manning did not quibble over the manner of putting it, but he denied the assertion flatly. "No — they cannot. At any rate they never have been, and probably never will be, unless it is in exceptional cases. Vicarious improvement don't do any real good. The lower classes have got to raise themselves if they are to get any genuine benefit. If men go on strike for, say, shorter hours, and win out through a lot of suffering, they are a long way ahead of where they'd have been if some philanthropic master had given them the concession without their having to try for it."

Lester had, in the end, tempered what he feared might be the discouraging effects of much that he had said, with the assurance that whatever Manning should ultimately decide to do, he had better be at the end of his life still a workingman, and true to his convictions, than many times a millionaire with a record of shirked ideals behind him.

And the six months of waiting having passed, Manning had taken the proposed step. His dismissal had, as he had foreseen, immediately followed.

In the city, when he reached it now, he bought an

evening paper. It had the news of the morning's accident at the mills. It had also the account of his own discharge and that of Kemble, Lockhart, and the other two suspects.

The latter affair was given an importance he had not expected. It was considered less for itself than as a premonition of what might follow. The men who had been turned off were, it was held, among the most prominent, steady, and reliable in Staunton. Several of them had grown up in the plant of that town. Their conversion was significant; a fair indication that the long-suppressed union propaganda might now spread rapidly. And since the discharged men were popular and leaders of sentiment among their fellows, it was not unlikely that many would join them personally, who might never, otherwise, have joined the association.

* * * * *

That such was to be the case the next few weeks made clear. A number of dismissals followed upon the first. There developed among the men the certainty that spies were at work. Resentment and bad feeling grew, and helped the missionary work which was going on systematically for the unions. Lockhart threw himself into the fight with vindictive purpose. Kemble worked, but less vigorously, and Manning was kept busy answering questions. Upon two occasions he spoke at small open meetings, and

each time thereafter accessions were more than usually numerous.

At the end of something over a fortnight the Staunton plant was crippled. Few new men appeared to fill the many vacancies. Although some were taken from the company's other mills, certain departments had soon to be shut down. The company determined to stand by the principles it had acquired at a heavy price; yet faithful to its loyal men, tried to run some other departments short-handed.

But the discharged men, feeling themselves now sufficiently strong and numerous to take an open position, joined together for the organization of an advisory committee. The committee appointed Lockhart its chairman and proceeded definitely to action. With threats or by a severe moral compulsion, most of the workmen, mechanics, and laborers still in the mills were brought out, and the company, unable longer to run the plant, announced that it would shut down.

CHAPTER V

Hélas! quel est l'amour où il n'y a pas d'égoïsme? Quel est celui d'entre nous qui aime uniquement pour l'objet aimé?

Alas! what love is there in which is no selfishness? Where among us is he who loves only the beloved?

— DUMAS.

It was a figure embodying a heavy wealth and luxury which came slowly out of the Tennant mansion and crossed the width of the portico between the great white granite Ionic pillars,—a figure, every detail of whose adornment was costly. It was hardly a question of the individuality of her who wore the garment which rippled and swept out in silken folds of pale tan. Yet so much of the face as showed from beneath the plumed black hat was Beatrice Tennant's. And the face was listless and dispirited. All a casket's contents of jewels and chains seemed to have been disposed about the intricate and exquisite costume. And the hands, as yet ungloved, were heavy with rings. Of the mere woman there was little left to heed. The drooping black hat hid even her hair, save for a few smooth strands.

She moved down the terrace steps to the carriage. It was her own footman who held open the door,

a boy dressed in an inconspicuous covert livery, that he might as little as possible resemble the grotesque manikins which many among her acquaintances found satisfaction in parading as property to be made ridiculous at their pleasure.

As she told him where she was to be driven, and he took his place beside the coachman, she sank back with a movement of weariness and indifference. The coupé went down the driveway under the English elms, and into the avenue, the most beautiful street of the city—upon each side of which, extending, far out, were built the houses belonging to millionaires of overnight growth.

There recurred to Beatrice a comment of Valerio's. He had said that he knew no city more nearly typifying the economic conditions of the age and country—for the most part unattractive and sordid, a portion in the very heart squalidly evil and dangerous; and one or two outlying avenues of great, very new, riches. Why, upon the smallest provocation, was she constantly recalling his words and opinions? The mental condition upon her part was certainly not superinduced by a constant bodily presence upon his. Though he was now in the city again, he had been away for some weeks, and, whether studiously or instinctively, he avoided surfeiting her with his companionship. But his personality did not need to have recourse to the devices of feebler ones, which must keep themselves

in sight to be in mind. He was so continually in the background of her consciousness that any chance suggestion served to call up some one of his judgments or estimates. Yet it was not a first indication that she might love him. She was calmly certain as to that. The sincere liking she had for him was not the ground sentiment from which another more intense could ever grow up. Nevertheless, there was no one whom she was at all times so content to have for a companion, to whom she spoke so freely and without restraint, sure that she would be understood.

At the present moment she was even aware that she had a distinct desire to see him ; a hope that he might be at the place to which she was herself going,—an exhibition of portraits, among which was hung her own. Her mood was one with which only he could agree. It had been brought about by a realization of her own utter insignificance in the working out of events. The sense of the enormous forces of human nature, civilization, and circumstances was oppressing her. Those which were developing at Staunton seemed to be beyond the control of any one person or set of persons. As for any influence she herself might be able to exert—it merely did not exist. After five years of trying to do her part to bring about at least enough good feeling between the Staunton people and her father to prevent just such trouble as now threatened, there was nothing whatever accomplished. She had

liked to believe that she was really a factor in the life of this one small spot. Yet it was evident now, that she might as well never have gone near it or have given it a thought for all the result apparent at the first strain. There had come to her with sudden force all the futility of following in this day the time-honored methods of benefiting the working classes. The Lord or Lady Bountiful was nothing more or less than a picturesque anachronism. Such questions as were to be fought out in Staunton were not even borne upon by philanthropy—and ought not to be. Their source was too fundamental and organic for any such easy surface treatment. And as nothing more important than philanthropy was possible for a woman, would it not then be better, simpler, more suitable for her to live out her own life—to a greater extent than she had been willing to do heretofore—by the policy of *laissez-faire*?—than which, after all, nothing more inevitable had been discovered by all the schools. Matters were bound to take their course in any case. Wherein was the use of concerning herself and beating against existing conditions in protest? Those conditions had given her wealth, and position of a sort. It would be well to accept these and thank that Fortune which not all the struggles or prayers, reasonings or attempted compulsions that had run through the ages, had been able to make other than capricious.

And it was in this spirit that she had dressed with

an extravagance of value and detail she rarely permitted herself—the less so when, as now, she was to go down into the heart of the city in full day. She had put on her gloves, and the rings they hid pressed into her fingers. In a case in front of her was a little hand-mirror. She leaned forward and took it out, looking first at so much of her reflection as the small disk of glass could show, then at the mirror itself. It was of gold, with a jewelled handle, and the miniature of a woman's head, painted upon ivory, set in the back. Several companion pieces were in the case, as well as a jewel-set carriage clock. Her father had given them all to her the year before as part of the coupé. Usually they seemed to her inexcusably, painfully extravagant. To-day she took a sensuous pleasure in them. She leaned back again luxuriously, more than ever conscious of the softness of the cushions, the scent of fine leathers and faint perfume, the special isolation from the streets and their people. And she kept the mirror in her hand until they were well into the business district.

Then, glancing out through the dropped window, she caught sight of Durran walking just ahead. He was going fast, as he always did, and walking near the curb to avoid the crowd. With another she might have inferred haste. As it was, she had the coachman drive up to the edge of the sidewalk. She bent forward and spoke. That Durran did not resent being made to lose

headway, for this purpose at any rate, his face gave quick evidence.

"I am on my way to see how my portrait hangs," she began. "Have you time to go with me?" and she made a gesture toward the space at her side. It was unmistakably to his regret that he was obliged to refuse.

"There is a directors' meeting in —" he drew out his watch "— in exactly twelve minutes. I am afraid I can't make it. Much," he added with obvious sincerity, "as you must know that I should like to." It was not often that she showed him even this degree of favor. His look went over her with plain approval. Was it, he asked, that all beholders might realize how inferior to the living truth was the painted presentment that she had made herself so more than ever lovely to-day?

"It is that I may forget my origin in display and pomp, perhaps," she said in a half mockery, under which was a tinge of bitterness. She remembered at once that the words had been Valerio's when he had spoken of the Roman tribune. There went over Durran's face a shade of dissatisfaction. He knew what that origin was, and knew that others did; but he would have preferred to have her commit it, as far as possible, to oblivion.

She left him standing upon the sidewalk—a tall, sinewy, well-knit figure, the typical American of five-

and-thirty — and she drove on to the exhibition without him.

It had opened that day in the banquet hall of one of the large hotels; and the famous Spanish portrait painter, who had, for the time being, become the fashion, shared the premises with a vender of Oriental rugs. The latter was using the floor to spread forth his wares. Whether or no the artist were inclined to fancy the commercial juxtaposition, there could be no doubt that the usually bare room was improved and rendered luxurious by the deep and mellow colors. The dark individual in charge had arranged divans spread with silk carpets, and had heaped others less fine in texture to serve as seats. As Beatrice went in, stepping from the tiled corridor upon the silent carpeting — one thickness of rich pile laid beneath another — she saw at once that the Turk's wares divided honors with the artist's canvases, if, indeed, the interest in the former were not more genuine than that in the latter. Even as it was, there were not many in the room, though the exhibition had long been heralded. And of the few the majority were women. There were not a half-dozen men. But Valerio was among those. Though his face was turned from her, and he was the length of the hall away, Beatrice recognized him instantly, if only by his erect carriage and the breadth of his shoulders, a trifle too great for his height. Here, at least, was a man who had time to give a woman com-

panionship, and to take an interest in that which was of interest to her, to any one not utterly absorbed with getting wealth and keeping it. Business and managers' meetings did not crowd out all else in life for him. What though he were, in consequence, obliged to marry with a view to obtaining in that way the money he did not earn? A wife would be more apt to be happy with him than with the average work-possessed American.

She believed that it was in the hope of finding her here that Valerio had come. As for the women, many were her acquaintances. When they saw her, they came quickly forward, a small bevy of girls equally as clothed in fine raiment as herself. And she regretted at once her own elaborate toilet. Had she, as a result of it, as little distinction as they? Did she too look as rich—and merely rich? Was her own individuality as obliterated in stuffs and gems?

Though she saw far too little of any of these young women to be able to count herself the friend of one, there was manifest upon all their parts a warm admiration for her. It was evident that had she but wished to take the trouble, to make any least exertion, she might have been a leading spirit among them. They spoke of her portrait in terms of unmeasured praise. Two of them went with her to where it hung. It was but one removed from the picture of one Woolmer, a coke magnate, in painting whom the subtle Castilian

had amused himself ironically, and all unsuspected by either the sitter or the general public. Valerio, who knew the magnate, had understood, however, and a half smile was still upon his face as he turned at the sound of Miss Tennant's voice:

He went to Beatrice at once. She flushed slightly at the consciousness that the meeting must seem pre-arranged to these others who were already, she knew, observing and commenting upon the prince and herself. That it did so was evidenced by their being left alone together almost at once.

"I have been studying your portrait," Valerio told her. "And I like it unusually well—even for Saleta's work." She was represented in the same dress in which he had first seen her in her home; but the background, instead of being the deep Indian yellow of the drawing-room draperies, was a flat sienna red, absolutely without planes or shading; but although there was nothing uncommon in the standing pose,—which showed her full length, slender but unusually well built for an American woman,—there was a suggestion of intense life.

"If I had not already known it," Valerio went on, "I think I should have guessed that he has been strongly under the influence of both Henner and Chaplin. The former seems to have inspired him, and the latter to have imparted his method—though it is an unlikely enough combination, too. The only trace of

Henner which appears to have remained lies in the ability to give his figures a quality of having light in themselves." It was a quality, as he had often noticed, which Beatrice had herself. With the creamy paleness of her skin, the eyes and hair almost the same fawn brown, and the dress usually carried out in tones which afforded no contrast, she might easily have given the impression of something faded and monochrome. Yet it was, upon the contrary, that of warmth and color. The artist had managed to reproduce this in an unusual degree.

Valerio looked at her as if for comparison with the portrait, and seemed to notice for the first time that she had gone to the opposite extreme from her usual simplicity in dress—a simplicity which he had, without direct words, let her feel that he approved. Now she was arrayed like a rich American woman, or a European one of questionable status. She saw pass across his face a shade of inquiry and disappointment. Durran had been pleased. This man's discrimination was finer, and his very disapproval was more satisfactory to her than the other's praise.

They went the circuit of the room. Many portraits showed men and women whom she knew. To some of the faces the Spaniard's art, rather more exquisite than bold, had imparted its own refinement for want of any to reproduce. Only in the coke magnate's case had he displayed his fine vein of malice, the humorous ap-

preciation which Beatrice did not perceive. He had managed to set forth upon the canvas, not only the sitter's prosperous present, but his past — which was that of a butcher's clerk. But Beatrice's eyes were not keen to that, which needed possibly, Valerio could not but think, a longer distance than she had travelled from any similar past, to give the proper focus to the sight.

"I had intended, Miss Tennant," he said, as they came to the end of the line, "to go to your home this afternoon."

Her hesitation was for a hardly perceptible instant, yet in that time she thought of much. Then she told him that her carriage was waiting if he cared to go back with her now, to tea.

She had been enough in foreign lands to know that, even allowing all latitude for the American woman's freedom of action, she had committed herself in his eyes to the acceptance of his suit. But she took a refuge which she recognized the while to be unworthy, in the counter knowledge that by the standards of her own people she had showed no more than a meaningless, almost inevitable, civility, binding her, even morally, to nothing.

She waited to order sent to her home a rug, of price out of all proportion to its size — a rich old-ivory color in the groundwork, with a design in light brown and ochre. It would, she explained to him, fill a place in her own sitting-room. He found himself imagining

that room as it seemed to him it must be. Then, as he watched the process of purchase, in which she manifested a good sense as to value and a quiet determination not to have her wealth exploited, he thought of uncarpeted bits in his own ancestral halls. Would she wish to have the great salons and chambers there in the shades she so markedly favored? If so, he would be only too thankful that he was not obliged to marry a woman who would choose harsh blues and glaring scarlets. He had felt for some compatriots whom fiercer stress had driven to do so.

As Beatrice moved away from the Oriental, Valerio drew her attention to the far end of the room where her own portrait was. Did she chance to know, he asked, who might be the man standing there? "He came in a moment since, looked around the hall, and then went straight to his mark with a directness that argues well for his success in life. I inferred that it was rather concern with yourself than with art in general that brought him here."

As if conscious that he was being observed and spoken of, the man turned. He saw them, evidently for the first time. His hat was in his hand, but he bowed gravely to Beatrice, and then stepping a little backward returned to his survey of the picture.

"It is a workman from Staunton," she said. "You may have seen his name in the papers recently. It is Manning — Neil Manning."

Valerio did not recall it. But he allowed himself a leading remark upon the man's presence. "He has certainly as little the look of a dilettante as he has that of what we conservative Europeans usually think of as a workingman."

She gave the only explanation which occurred to her, — a probable curiosity to see how a famous painter had portrayed a woman whom he himself had known and played with as a child. The Italian made no comment. He accepted it as she herself very evidently did, as having no significance.

It seemed to him, as the carriage rolled softly away, that he was near to her now for the first time — shut in with her, away from all the rest of the world, breathing the atmosphere of her femininity. Fate, he thought, had been more good to him than he might have a right to hope, in that she had made it possible for him to love the woman he could also marry. He did love her; though not — as past experience had taught him — to the full extent possible for his nature.

She saw that his eyes rested on the handle of the mirror with its deep-set topaz and ruby chips. She drew it out, showing him the miniature. Once she had done the same with Durran, — the remembrance came to her, — when the coupé and all its fittings had been a new possession. Durran had given a perfunctory glance at the painting, and then had reversed the mirror at an angle which made it reflect her face,

and had turned some compliment to the more charming picture in the glass. Valerio had recourse to no such device. He never spoke in compliments. He put back the mirror after a suitable appreciation. "I had supposed," he said, "that you were a sort of feminine Marcus Aurelius, living in simplicity yourself in the midst of wealth and circumstance." It was his nearest allusion to her present appearance, and she understood it as such.

"To-day," she answered more openly, "if I had had the garments of cloth of gold, and all the other accessories, I should, I think, have loaded myself down after the manner of the Roman women of the early Christian centuries."

They drove through the uncompromisingly ugly business streets, through the slums which held the very middle of the city, and out again to where the houses began to present a little better appearance.

"It is not an attractive city," she passed judgment impartially. "Over there"—she motioned in the direction of the opposite river bank, which, from where they were at the moment, was plainly in view across a chasm of bluffs—"over there is a sort of sombre dignity; but here we have not even that."

Valerio took his time in answering. "It *is* an unattractive city," he said slowly; "yet I have come back to it, and I have remained much longer than was needed to see its life. Need I tell why I have done so, Miss Tennant?"

There was a silence, and in it he turned toward her and looked in her face. He was an adept at reading emotions, but now he could see none to read. "I have hoped," he went on, "that I might take back to Italy with me the promise that you would some day be my wife." He paused, as if to give what he should next say the weight which impetuosity would have lacked. Then he added, "You must have known, I think, that I love you." He made no fervid protestations, but his voice carried the conviction of truth.

She was under no illusions, and she knew that he would not have asked her to marry him if she had not had a rich father; that he would not even have allowed himself to care for her. Yet why should she refuse him merely because he wanted her wealth as well as herself; merely because she did not love him as she might have wished to love? It was almost certain that that wealth would be more or less of a factor in any marriage she might make. Excepting only Durran, not one of the many men who had wished to have her had been above the suspicion of mercenary motives. And how could she know that she would ever love any other man better than she did this one, who was so thoroughly companionable to her, with whom—she was convinced of that—she would always be satisfactorily happy unless some unsuspected depth of passion should be aroused in her or himself?

Then, too, Italy had laid its spell upon her, had

appealed to one side of her character — that very side which was uppermost to-day, and which was capable of indefinite development. A title in itself did not attract her; but that which it represented, which went with it, and which it were sheer vulgarity and mental paucity to deny, influenced her greatly.

“If you are willing to grant me nothing further for the present,” Valerio was saying, “may I not still keep the hope?”

She temporized. “If you will understand,” she said, “that I am bound by that to no more.”

He had not asked her for the love which she was confident that she could not, could never give. She doubted if he would ever do so.

Was it only the Anglo-Saxon, out of all the nations, who demanded in his bride at least some love to meet his own? With the rest of mankind it might be that an unimpassioned affection — at the best — sufficed. That, she believed, she would be able to give Valerio.

CHAPTER VI

The cankers of a calm world and long peace. — SHAKESPEARE.

WHEN a train has been going along for hours without a stop, and suddenly runs more slowly and is still, there is something the same feeling of cessation, of actual physical discomfort, which falls upon a manufacturing town when the mills are off.

In the heavy quiet of a fog-choked morning, the gates of the Staunton plant were closed, and the men groped back to their homes through a white mist which hid anything twenty feet away, and left each curiously alone in the smother, though every sound from invisible sources was magnified.

Breakfast in the innumerable boarding-houses and restaurants was on time; but the men straggled in, loitering, thrown out of their bearings, when hours and days were not disposed of aforetime. Leisure disconcerted them. Because they were not accustomed to it, they had no notion of employing it. Some were taciturn and others declamatory. A few had been drinking, just past daylight though it was; but all, as usual, bent over their plates, eating fast and swallowing their hot coffee hurriedly.

Manning, whose room was on another street, came into his boarding-house among the first. It was the best in Staunton. The best men and the highest paid went to it, and it partook of the nature of a club in that no newcomer was admitted without the consent of those already in possession. Manning found many of the men dubious and depressed, worried over the prospects before them, yet—actuated by various motives worthy or vindictive—resolute as to standing by the cause for which they had declared. Since they were unmarried, long idleness was not for them the matter of sickening dread which it was to the fathers of families. And as they were highly skilled workmen, they had not much fear of being indefinitely unemployed. There were a number, however, who were still determined to remain independent of the unions, and who were bitterly resentful against those whose actions had brought things to the present pass. They had their own considerable following.

One of them, whose place was across from Manning's at the long table, precipitated a discussion. He was of the men who had read widely upon subjects of government, economics, and political theories. And he strengthened his first attack with a quotation, "It's true what De Tocqueville says,—if you belong to the unions or any of them kinds of associations, you abjure your own judgment and

free will, and the societies gets an insupportable tyranny over you."

Manning looked at him with a quick, steady glance which summed him up. Then he turned his attention to stirring his coffee. "I think you'll find," he said, "that a few lines farther on there is something about no man having a right to claim himself a free citizen who submits his opinions to another's control and consents to obey with servility. Am I right?"

The man planted his elbows on the table and took it up. "Who is submitting his opinions and obeying with servility?"

"I wasn't pointing that out," objected Manning, amicably. "I was only trying to make you see that if *I* had not become a union man, I should have been submitting my opinions to another's control and obeying with servility. I had come to believe that the union was right." He took up his cup and drank some of the coffee. "And I hope you will some day," he added, setting the cup down again.

The man disclaimed any intention of ever allowing himself to do so.

"That is unfortunate," Manning commented without vehemence, "because this is an age where every business, from the one we work in to the ones that sell us our drugs and our books, is combined more or less exactly as the unions would like to have all

of us. It's an old maxim of our country that union is strength. If there is anybody who needs strength, it is the wage-earner."

"We'll lose any we've got if we don't keep the right to do as we please," protested the other, with heat.

"The further we get civilized the less we keep that right—as individuals. Perhaps you've read where some one tells us that a man isn't at liberty to do what he pleases with his own skin in a civilized community?"

"Unions is mapped out to benefit the lower level of the men—not the highest, the most intelligent," asserted the older man.

"So is democracy," answered Manning, complacently.

He had finished his breakfast, and he rose and waited now with his hands resting on the back of his chair. Standing there where the others were still seated and most of them looking toward him, his face showing that earnestness which does not waste itself in impetuosity and excitability, his head thrust somewhat forward, as were his powerful shoulders also, he was the embodiment of purpose, and he looked the man who has it in him to be followed, to either win or command adherence. But he was still young—only a couple of years past his majority. And the greater part of the men were older and

more cautious. Their reason spoke against the unreasoning instinct which inclined them to be strongly influenced by him.

"I wonder—" he said to his man directly, but over the head of him to all the others who were listening—"I wonder how many of us who value what we have already got realize that there's hardly an item we don't owe to the unions—even to the education we set so much store by for ourselves and our children? Yet there was a big enough cry of anarchy, not by any means a hundred years ago, when a labor federation demanded education for the workingman's family. It was as impudent and abominable then as it is for him now to try to say something that has got to be listened to about the right terms for his labor."

Whether it was that the other did not care to argue it further, or that he had heard a fact which was new to him and gave him pause for thought, he did not answer, but applied himself to his plate. Manning went out of the place.

Though the mist was still thick enough to make outlines indistinct, he saw ahead of him on the sidewalk a figure which limped badly. He knew it at once to be his cousin Farraday. Farraday, who had been a laborer in the plant, was an honest, hard-working fellow, a widower who supported four children to whom he was devoted. He had been lamed some years before by a pair of fellow-laborers who had caught him sleep-

ing on the casting floor and had indulged in one of the popular and brutal jokes common among their kind, putting a piece of quicklime upon his leg and pouring water over it. The burn, though not severe, had had more than the usual consequences, through having been neglected. Farraday, poorly able to afford either medical attendance or laying off for several days, had paid no attention to the wound, and had gone on with his work. The sore had gradually spread and eaten deeper. A period in the hospital had resulted, and a lameness for life which made his toil more than ever hard and exhausting.

Manning overtook him and walked beside him, shortening his own steps to the uneven ones.

Farraday was in an angry temper and expressed himself at a good deal of length, arraigning Manning in particular and the union men in general. "It's a pity," he finished, his voice broken with indignation, "that you can't keep from dragging us into the trouble. It's what you try to do, and you work it damned often. You don't want to leave anybody the chance to live if he don't dance to the tune you play. I've got to work, and I want to work. And here I am thrown out of a job for God Almighty knows how long — me who's got a family of four little kids to look after." The tears came into his eyes in his desperation.

Manning did not try to go into the matter with him beyond an attempt to defend himself and the union

men from the charge of being to blame in this instance. They had, he reminded, been discharged themselves.

"You're as slick with your tongue as the rest of them," retorted the distressed laborer, contemptuously. "Tennant done a good business when he kicked you out first thing. He'd ought to have run you out of town too, all of you. There's trouble and broken contracts and bullying and interference wherever you get in. Don't talk to me," he interrupted the reply Manning was beginning. "All your smooth tongue don't change it that I've got four children to feed, and that I don't know how I'm going to go about it. You —" he reminded with an accent of bitter envy — "you don't have to worry. You'll get your benefit all right." He was not to be placated or won over, and he went his way across the river to the city, walking all the distance to save the five cents which had now a multiplied value.

Manning kept on through the streets of the town. The shops were just opened, and the fruits and vegetables were being set out in front of the stores. There was a smell of pavements and wood floors being sprinkled and swept. The sun was coming through the fog and the sky was showing blue, with little gray haze, since no smoke rolled now from the Staunton lines of stacks, nor from those of the mills in the district which the general strike order had closed.

Up in the lifting white mist there appeared, now

and then, dangling from telegraph poles, limp, absurd figures. They were effigies of Tennant, Durran, and others of the company, which had been run up the night before. "Those," said Manning aloud, though to himself, "will have to come down." It seemed to him a sort of thing arguing about the state of intelligence of sticking pins into the wax shape of an enemy and melting it before the fire. And just so long as that state of intelligence should continue, just so long would the condition of the men who had not progressed beyond it continue to be what it was now. The work of a few leaders, the benefits of a few masters, even legislation itself, would be helpless to effect any great betterment.

Untidy women in wrappers came from doorways which showed vistas of dark, dirty rooms, or from foul yards where sometimes a sooty green plant or two grew in rubbish and offal, — giving token of at least a wish for better things, though it were a wish as unflourishing and discouraged as the poor plants themselves. The women slouched by, their hair unbrushed and dusty, their skirts dragging, their feet not infrequently bare. Nearly all were dark-skinned, — Italians, Russians, Hungarians, Poles. They carried pitchers of blue milk, loaves of bread, and chunks of stale, dark red, raw meat for the breakfast there was now no need of having at any especial time. And they called harshly, screechingly, to one another in uncouth tongues.

Manning thought of the appalling task stretching far, indefinitely ahead into time, which raising and educating such as these would present—a task, however, imperative, needed, lying close at hand, and beside which that of the missionary to heathen lands was far inferior in difficulty, value, and dignity, though the latter might carry with it honor, and the former something almost obloquy. And until the raising and education could be accomplished—if that could ever be—the demand was a crying one for some sane power which should be able to lead and control, with absolute dominance.

Tennant had, at one time, helped in the erection of a model tenement-house, which now, after a very few years, was in a state of utter disrepair, having been shamelessly abused with entire indifference to the future. Tennant, much disgusted with the shiftlessness and slovenliness of the inmates, had refused to put it in order time and again, as he was evidently expected to do. And it was, as a consequence, about the least desirable house in Staunton. As Manning came in front of it he saw four familiar figures in a doorway on the lowest steps. They were Farraday's children. The eldest was Nettie, aged twelve. The youngest was also a girl, not yet a year old, puny and undersized, but precociously wise-looking and solemn. Manning was immensely a favorite with the four, little as they saw of him. Nettie, calling a greeting, sat the

baby upon the sidewalk with a bump which jerked its too large head, and came running. The boys, aged respectively six and four, followed. Nettie caught one of the big hands of this much-admired second cousin and, swinging to it with both her own, skipped along beside him. The two boys, who felt in honor bound to emulate their big sister in all that she did, clung to the fingers on the other side, being thereby nearly lifted upon the tips of their toes.

Nettie was bare-legged quite to the knees, and her flannel dress was all that she wore, as the skin, showing through a tear or two, was proof. It was not so bad now in the spring weather, but there had been winter days when she had not been a great deal better clothed, and when the sight of her purple and red flesh had made Manning's own thick ulster burn like a Nessus shirt. Upon two different occasions he had given her coats.

There was too much keenness and eagerness in Nettie's eyes as she peered from under the shock of coarse brown hair — the look of a lean young wolf in which the instinct for the hunt is developing. But he knew that she had many virtues. In the last half year since her mother had died she had been the keeper of the two rooms which represented home — a mother to the three younger children. The baby, in particular, was the object of a quite maternal solicitude and interest.

He looked at the trio which swung from his hands. They were none too well fed now. Before long they would probably be hungry—even at starvation. He gave them some pennies and sent them into a wretched little bakery, with instructions to buy anything they might like which should not be trash.

He was on the street along which the railroad tracks ran to the mills, and he followed it down. There was a whitewashed fence around the whole of the yards. It was raised on a bank of earth and clinkers, and was, in height, rather more than that of a man. Halfway up there were, at regular intervals, holes sufficiently large to allow the passing of a rifle barrel. There was also around the top a barbed-wire strand, the which, it was believed by the men, could be electrized at will. The fence had been put up during the time of the past armed struggle between the union employees and the company of which Tennant had been then merely a not very important officer. It was known by the company as a fence, by the men as a stockade. Coal and iron policemen were at the gates, and through the sight-holes blue uniformed watchmen could be seen moving about in the yards. Laborers, children, and even some workingmen were jeering and casting taunts through the fence, as well as hooting “scab” and “blacksheep,” and more offensive terms yet, after occasional men who went by on the street.

Manning made several efforts to put a stop to it,

which were effectual only so long as he was in sight. Such puerilities as calling names and hanging effigies were tactics with which he had small patience. But they would probably continue under Lockhart's leadership. The violence which he himself believed should not be resorted to under any provocation whatsoever, Lockhart would be the very one to urge and incite. And the subject of Lockhart's election to the chairmanship had therefore been one upon which — as a member of the advisory committee — he had already unequivocally expressed himself. Since the election he had opposed most of Lockhart's moves at every turn. The latter took it as being actuated by personal motives and by jealous rivalry. "You keep on kicking up trouble and fighting me in this committee, and I'll run you out of it, and out of the town, too," he had threatened.

"No," had differed Manning, unmoved and deliberate. "I don't think you will."

The committee and many outside it had begun to be not too well satisfied with the temper and methods of the chairman. It had not been as a militant body that they had intended to organize, but as one to work for the interests of the men who were without positions and without much prospect of getting any. It had been also their intention to, if possible, oblige the company to unionize the mills and take back its old workmen as union members. Lockhart had been

elected in the first flush of antagonism, and because of the work he had done. But already those who preferred Manning's more conservative attitude were growing in number.

Lockhart might, nevertheless, have kept his leadership indefinitely had it not been for an encounter with Farraday upon the very day of the shut-down. It was not with those so low in the social scale as day laborers that Lockhart, as a rule, concerned himself. He happened, however, to be thrown in Farraday's company for a few minutes upon the porch of the town hall. And fanaticism, together with a meddling disposition, moved him to begin with the dinkey man upon the uppermost topic.

Farraday, usually peaceable, was to-day worked up over his misfortunes, goaded and made savage by total failure to get anything to do in the city. His answers to Lockhart were such as to bring blows within a few seconds. The first was struck by Lockhart, who was not averse to attacking a lame man. But Farraday, in spite of his lameness, was a muscular fellow with an Irish father's fighting blood. Lockhart had fared badly, though he might have escaped with only a bruising and two closed eyes, save for a too sudden dodge which caused him to plunge backward down the steps. The town hall was built on the side of a steep hill, and the steps were high ones, with little incline. The force of

the fall was considerable, and he landed full upon the point of his shoulder. The collar-bone, which had been broken once not long before, was broken again, and when he was helped up, he presented a twisted, one-sided appearance, and was cursing with fury and pain.

Yet he could, no doubt, have resumed his duties as chairman within a few days had not the majority of the committee, after a hot debate, chosen to consider him indefinitely out of the running. Manning was elected to his place. Lockhart, being apprised of the event, in the rage of a blinded Cyclops, did himself further injury by unsetting the broken bone. And even while he was enduring its replacing by a surgeon, too annoyed to be gentle, the new chairman was already on his way to a mass meeting in the city.

It was not Manning's intention to go cautiously about reversing his predecessor's policy—to bide his time. Dilatory tactics were opposed to his methods of life. The time, in his opinion, was the present, and his attitude should be defined once and for all, his stand taken now.

CHAPTER VII

Eh! non, ne vous trompez pas; les plus grandes distances ne sont pas celles que la Nature a marquées par les lieux.

Ah, no! do not make that mistake; the greatest distances are not those which Nature has marked by localities.

—JULIE DE LESPINASSE.

ALAN TENNANT opened the door of his daughter's sitting-room and went in. And Beatrice, rising from the broad window-seat, came forward to him, tall, supple-moving in the long folds of her morning-gown, her hair lying in a loose coil upon her neck, which was bare and showed the strength that gave her head its fine poise.

Tennant was rigid in his adherence to the triple division of his day into equal seasons for sleep, work, and recreation. It was a rule which the most importunate and insistent was obliged to accept, that, save within the eight office hours, he was not to be approached upon business. He was ready for affairs at nine o'clock. He put them entirely from him at five. And in the years since he had been his own master, few considerations had been so urgent as to cause his overstepping the limits he had set. At present it was not much after eight and he had followed his usual custom

of coming to see Beatrice before driving himself down into the city. He had had his frugal coffee and rolls in his own room, and Beatrice had breakfasted less simply in hers.

The great white granite house, set far back in its grounds, lacked any of the home life which comes of common interests and acts. From the few minutes in the little sitting-room, until the tedious and formal dinner through which the two always sat, late in the evening, Beatrice and her father never met, unless by some special appointment.

She had been looking over her mail, ensconced in the seat of the open window, and the cushions were strewn with letters. There was also a long cardboard box from which the cover had been taken, and which showed out of a folding of waxed paper the leaves, long stems, and yellow petals of Safrana roses. Tennant looked at them, and taking one up, held it out to her. "Am I to have a rosebud?" he asked. She cut the stem and pinned the bud to his coat. He took it for granted that the flowers were some she had ordered for herself—the florist being regularly called upon to supply the deficiencies of the Tennant hothouse, which was not large. But as he pushed the box a little to one side and sat himself where it had been, a card fell to the floor. He stooped and picked it up. It was Valerio's. Beatrice was certain that when in his business he gained some point which gave him sat-

isfaction, he employed the same mask of unconcern which was on his face now. "So they are from the Prince?" he said. He used the title always in preference to the name.

"Yes," answered Beatrice. "They were brought up with the letters."

Why, he asked her, had she said nothing of this to him?

"Is it so very extraordinary for some one to send me flowers?" she inquired, smiling.

He ignored the evasion, which was, after all, sufficient reply to much, since she was usually simple and direct.

"Does he want to marry you, Beatrice?" he said, looking at her closely.

"Yes," she told him, without any color coming into her face. It was the first time he had ever questioned her in regard to such a matter, though often before he had supposed that men had made love to her and had been refused. They were neither of them given to futile discussion of what might be or might have been.

"Have you accepted him?" he asked now.

She told him in a few words.

"I hope you will decide to marry him," Tennant expressed himself unequivocally. "Probably he wants my money. But then any man will have an eye to that." The thing did not seem so pleasant when he said it as when she excused it to herself. "And," he

went on, "if you have got to be married for money, it is better to let a foreigner do it—he is not so contemptible in being able to as an American would be." He saw that she did not look well pleased. "You might as well accept that philosophically and in a matter-of-fact way, Beatrice," he counselled, with kind intent. "It is one of the things you have to pay in exchange for wealth. You can never be sure you have love—not even for a short while, as poorer mortals sometimes can.

"This man," he urged, "is a very decent sort of fellow from what I have found out—uncommonly good for a prince. I would not keep him waiting too long, if I were you—there are other women who are richer to be had for precious little asking. And such a match is not to be made every day."

Beatrice moved uneasily and, rising, took the roses and put them on a table out of the sunshine. "I must take time to think of it," she said. And then she tried to lead him from the subject. She had a letter which she wished to read him. She took it from among those upon the cushions. "It is from Mr. Lester," she said.

Tennant did not owe his success in life to a character which allowed him to be quite so easily diverted from the thing upon which his mind was set. "You are not thinking of marrying John Durran, are you?" he asked with unmistakable hardness. She answered that

she was not, and he might well have been assured of her sincerity. But he was not a good judge of either men or women, save in business relations, since the reading of motives requires something more than wariness and ever ready suspicion.

"Because," he added, "you will not have my consent to that — not under any circumstances."

If she had had the remotest idea of accepting Durran, the attempt to command her would have strengthened it. She noticed the antagonism which had never formerly been in his manner in speaking of the manager. Had Durran gone finally too far in expressing his own ideas as to the policy pursued by the company's head? She believed it not improbable, for he was inclined to be indifferent to consequences in saying what he thought. In that case, her father would be certain to become as set against him as he was against all else which opposed him, from the unions down.

"I have no thought whatever of marrying John," she repeated, "and I have told him so — in a way which he should believe." She opened the letter in her hand and began to read it to him.

Since the time that Lockhart had got control of the situation across the river, Lester had advised strongly against her going over to Staunton, even though her services were needed. Now, however, that Manning had been appointed to the chairmanship, he wrote that in his opinion it would be quite safe for her to take up

her duties again. "The place is rather more quiet, if anything, than when the plant is in operation," he told her, "for the reason that most of the town authorities are on the committee and are throwing their influence with Manning." The liquor dealers, he went on to enlarge, were under surveillance, that drunkenness might be prevented; both banks of the river were picketed, to keep out not only non-union men, but undesirable characters; and the streets were thoroughly patrolled. "I should say you would be even safer here than in the city," he ended, "since there the ruffian may roam at large, and strikers from the other mills are everywhere."

Tennant had by no means relished the implied eulogy of Manning. But he knew from other accounts that the condition of Staunton was as peaceable as the clergyman had said. He himself believed that there would be no danger for Beatrice, less indeed than in the city itself, even as Lester had suggested. And though his wrath was mightily kindled against Staunton and all who were therein, it was not his desire to seem to conduct this question upon the lines of resentment and ill-will, rather than upon those of impersonal principle. He not only wished to continue his benefactions as usual, but to have it known that he was doing so. He therefore gave his permission for Beatrice to take up her work at Staunton again, for the time being, at least, until there should begin to manifest itself some of that violence which he was satisfied Manning could not for long

prevent, even supposing him to be sincere in trying. "And there will be extra funds at your disposal if you need them," he added. "You will probably have plenty of calls for them before the trouble is over." Then he rose and started to the door. "Remember me to Lester," he said. In Tennant's opinion Lester was a well-intentioned but mistaken youth who was giving his life to a thankless task, and that in spite of the offer of better things—from the financial and social standpoint—which Tennant had himself made. The latter was a vestryman and *de facto* manager of a church in the city which could not well afford to forego his support. He stopped with his hand on the knob and looked back. "I hope you will decide for Prince Valerio," he reminded pointedly. He did not wait for her answer, but went out and closed the door.

Beatrice arranged Valerio's roses in a couple of vases. When she had dressed she fastened several in her belt. Then she went out and took the street-car to Staunton. It was never her custom to go in her carriage. The cars took her directly to the church and the parish house.

In Lester's office in the latter small building, she found a woman whom she did not know, and whom the rector presented as Mrs. Kemble.

The stiff and unwilling hand which Mrs. Kemble put out might, in itself, have been enough to deter Beatrice from attempting further well-meant advances.

But in dealing with the Staunton people there was usually allowance to be made for constraint felt in the presence of the magnate's daughter. It was a negative force which Beatrice had found she must overcome. Mrs. Kemble's only response to her words was to barely bow the head which was surmounted by a very large crimson hat. Beatrice was sure now of the insolent intention. She met the small, cold eyes with a look of quiet rebuke, then turned deliberately away. She never fell into the deprecating over-anxiety to please which she had often observed upon the part of the rich, when in presence of those less fortunate than themselves. She admitted no claim to superiority upon the score of her father's wealth. On the other hand, she was not to be put upon the defensive because of it. It was a lesson which had been inculcated by the sisters who had taught her in the convent—one of the several things she had learned which Tennant had not arranged for, and which she would hardly have acquired in the average girl's school in her own land.

And now, though she did not resort to a rigid behavior and immobility to express her dignity, Mrs. Kemble felt that by some subtlety unknown to herself the dignity had nevertheless been maintained. From underneath the lids, more dangerously drooped than ever, she cast an unpleasant look at the back of the figure in the plain tan suit. Then, as Miss

Tennant was already in conversation with Lester, — a conversation which did not include herself, — she went toward the door. Lester was before her and opened it. He closed it behind her, and went back to his chair.

“That woman,” he said, with a jerk of his head in the direction of the street, “has taken, of late, to coming here at all hours for no sufficient reason.”

Was she not rather defiant? Beatrice questioned.

She had certainly seemed to be, just now, Lester answered. “Though it is, after all, only her usual manner somewhat accentuated. She makes me uncomfortable with her unvarying regular features showing from that mass of copper-colored hair parted over her ears, and that steely look from under her lids.”

Was Mrs. Kemble interested in the work? Beatrice asked.

“No,” said Lester, decidedly. “I don’t believe that she is. She makes a pretence of it; but it is some other reason brings her here.”

Beatrice could not help the speculation as to whether it might not be within the range of possibility that it was Lester himself who was the attraction for Mrs. Kemble. She had once heard one of his enthusiastic spinster admirers proclaim openly a love which was insisted upon as wholly spiritual, but in which Beatrice herself had not been able to help

misdoubting a more human tinge. And another had asserted that she would be willing to go the length of Staunton upon her knees for him.

"I have sometimes thought," said Lester, "that the frequent visits have something to do with the hope of meeting Manning here."

"Surely —" began Beatrice, and stopped.

"No," Lester answered the unasked question. "She is married to an old man, though," he continued. "As for Manning—the two or three times that they have happened to meet in my presence he has ignored her existence with a civil coolness which would, I should say, be calculated to make a woman either hate or love him violently. I may, of course, be doing her an injustice; but it has seemed to me, when I have intercepted her glances in his direction, that in her case it has had the latter effect. Besides," he added, "she brings up his name upon every occasion, and there is no keeping her away from it."

He was not a man to lightly handle the reputation of a woman of any class. It was only, perhaps, to Miss Tennant that he would have spoken as he did now. Their having been so often obliged to frankly discuss those with whom the work threw them had made it come as a matter of course that he should speak of what he was inwardly convinced was Mrs. Kemble's infatuation. He had already concerned himself about it not a little, fearing any such en-

tanglement for Manning as this silent, handsome, coarse-natured creature might succeed in drawing him into.

Then suddenly bethinking himself of another subject indirectly bearing upon the one with regard to which he had just expressed himself, he asked if Beatrice had chanced to read the report of Manning's speech at the mass meeting. She had seen it, since it had been in many papers and had caused favorable comment in all quarters save that of the somewhat belligerent official organs of certain unions.

"I heard it," said Lester. "I went over for the purpose, and it was worth a longer trip. He had courage to come out as he did." He told her of it somewhat in detail. It had not been the oratory which was remarkable. Manning had talked plainly and without any attempt at flowered phrases. "It was the hard sense and judgment, and his voice and personality, which turned the men flat about and led them with him, and that in spite of an antagonism at the first which showed itself in audible mutterings. He is not an orator," Lester passed his verdict, "but he is a clear-headed, forceful man — and he is gifted with a voice which makes any commonplace sound important."

The striking of the big clock which stood on the mantelpiece reminded him that the morning was already far spent, and that both Miss Tennant and

himself had affairs of more immediate moment to which to give their attention. He told her that Mrs. Steinberg's case needed looking into. She required various comforts, both bodily and mental. The birth of the child—which had happened two days before—had not served to take her out of continuous dwelling upon her husband's death and the manner of it. He gave Beatrice Mrs. Steinberg's address. It was a room upon the top floor of the erstwhile model tenement. She went out to find it.

There were a good many men in the streets, but there was no boisterousness. On the contrary, a sense of depression was over everything. These workmen, through their own fault or that of others, now without work, were obliged to face indefinite idleness and to remain inactive. They did not go away from Staunton, because elsewhere over all the country nearly every steel plant was shut down, and the skilled men wanting employment had no chance. Moreover, many had here the homes into which they had put the entire savings of years. It could be no easy matter for them to go forth into the world again, to begin life anew. They lingered, not knowing what else to do, hopelessly in hope that the company might decide to unionize the mills, or else that the unions might be beaten and all go on as before.

Those who knew Beatrice Tennant — and many who did not, but only saw a young woman who was evidently not one of their own class — looked after her with indifference. Such as raised their hats did so without any especial deference. If they might be trusted to do her no harm, they might also be counted upon to bear her no fondness. More than once she had experienced the tolerant good humor of the workingman toward whosoever stood upon no ground of superior privilege. She had gone to public places where she had had to be seated upon any chair or bench which was unoccupied. Under those conditions she had met with a courtesy a trifle unpolished, perhaps, but much more real than strangers of her own class would have been apt to accord her. Yet, on the other hand, when she had been obliged to make her way through crowds in a manner which in any fashion implied prerogative, she had been conscious of arousing ill-feeling. That she did so now, she was aware, though the only implication of superiority lay in the fact of her being Alan Tennant's daughter, and in an inevitably prosperous appearance. Twice she passed among groups gathered around some one who had taken it upon himself to speak, and who was launching forth into invective against her father and the existing social arrangements. But the groups were orderly and the men showed small interest. They listened for a while, then walked away.

Once she dropped her purse and did not know it until she had gone on for some distance. Then she returned for it. Three laborers sat on the ground in the shade of a sign-board. They were not six feet away from the purse, but they had neither touched it nor offered to take it to her.

She found Mrs. Steinberg in the top-story room, which was light and well aired but almost empty of furniture. Mrs. Steinberg's mother gave the assurance that the child in the soap-box cradle was well and strong. She could hardly have said the same of her daughter, who lay weak and only half-conscious, looking younger than ever with the two long braids of very fair hair which fell over the pillow and were tied with bits of shoe string at the end. Mrs. Steinberg had no sheets, but lay between stiff blankets which looked overmuch used, and the hard, cotton-stuffed pillow was without a case. Beatrice was too practical minded to expend sympathy upon that particular score. The child-mother did not feel the want of bed linen. But it was a pity that there was no better nurse than old Mrs. Dorne, who was, to say the least of it, an erratic and undependable creature, rather infirm, and apparently not very amiable. Beatrice had learned from Lester that the woman possessed a fairly good little cottage on the outskirts of Staunton, and she asked now why Mrs. Steinberg had not gone there for the birth of the baby. Mrs. Dorne explained that she had insisted

upon staying in the room which had been her home since her marriage.

“My husband —” said the old creature, abruptly, and entirely without preface — “my husband he was kilt, too. He worked in the blast furnace. There was a hang fell and the lid come off. He was burnt up, and so was four other men. I never seen him. There was nothin’ to see.” She gave it without apparent feeling, as if the horror had, by long dwelling upon it, grown to be a fact of her existence, like another. “The blast furnaces was worse in them days,” she added, “but there wasn’t no need for that accident. Only they was too busy making money to close down for repairs.” She turned upon Beatrice sharply. “You know what the damage to that furnace was? Thirty-five dollars. That’s all the lives of five men ever cost the company. Cheap, ain’t they? Cheaper’n mules !”

And forthwith she became as silent as she had been garrulous. Beatrice made haste to escape another outburst by concluding arrangements for furnishing Mrs. Steinberg with necessaries. She succeeded, too, in getting the grandmother to agree to accepting the help of a woman living in the building, whom Beatrice offered to pay for occasional services. Then she went down the wide but dirty stairs and into the street.

As she came upon the sidewalk she saw in front of another of the entrances Manning, who stood talking

to some children. He also had seen her, and had smiled in quick appreciation of the figure he must present with the four urchins clustered before him, and hanging upon his words, even to the baby in Nettie's arms, which stared with its grotesquely large eyes widely opened and fixed.

Beatrice stopped and spoke to him. On the instant Nettie looked her over with undisguised resentment and mistrust. She knew well enough who it was. There was little that Nettie did not know concerning what went on at Staunton. She had her own opinions, too. One of these was a dislike for Miss Tennant, based not upon acquaintance, but entirely upon the fact that she was rich. Nettie's inclination was communistic, not to say anarchistic. She was not pleased now to see her big cousin talking to Beatrice. It was defection to the natural enemy. And to make it worse, Manning turned and laid his hand upon her own head. "This is a second cousin of mine," he said, "Nettie Farraday — and these are more of the same." Nettie objected exceedingly to what she felt to be patronizing. She ducked her head and drew back. Miss Tennant's questions about the baby she answered under protest, all the while keeping that distinctly unattractive piece of luckless humanity held close in her thin arms and out of reach of possible touch from the gloved fingers.

After a minute Beatrice started to go on. Somewhat to her astonishment Manning fell into step beside her.

It was the first time he had ever allowed himself an action even thus far suggesting equality or familiarity.

The reason for it he came to as directly as it was his habit to come to all subjects, without circumlocution or waste of words. It was that he did not think it advisable for her to be about Staunton, and it seemed to her that she detected an undertone of more than necessary concern. She took it as due, in a certain measure, to interest in herself personally, but fully as much to interest in maintaining his own credit and that of his cause, before such portion of the world as took heed of events in Staunton and the surrounding territory. That credit would naturally suffer severely were any harm to befall herself. She told him what Lester had written, and also that she had her father's permission to come into the town. He was not satisfied.

"Yes," he said stubbornly, "the streets are well patrolled, and just now there is good order. You are safe enough from the workingmen,—the white ones, at any rate. But there is no being sure of the foreigners and the lower kind of day-laborers."

Beatrice offered that it was impossible for any one to bear her ill-will.

"No," he said, "it is not. They do bear you a good deal of ill-will, some of them."

She reflected that he was not at any pains to flatter her as to her universal popularity.

“And the smallest thing is likely to set the foreigners off, too,” he warned. “Just now, for instance, it is almost impossible to make them believe that it is a government inspector who is in the armor-plate department with Mr. Durran and not a Pinkerton. They are working themselves up over that. At the best you are liable to insult at any moment.”

Beatrice, however, was not one of the women who feel their self-respect so frail as to crumble away at the breath of an unpleasant word. And it had yet to come to her knowledge that an unprotected woman going quietly upon her own way with intent to do good work had met with serious ill-treatment. “I hardly think I shall be troubled,” she said. “In any case, such people as little Mrs. Steinberg and her baby have to be attended to.”

He did not answer. He walked along beside her and looked down at the head, with its fair brown hair showing beneath the hat. His face went gradually quite white. She raised her eyes and met his. They fell again quickly.

At the corner where she was to take the street-car she stopped. Down at the end of the street, a few squares away, was gathered a small crowd of men. Manning pointed to them. “Those,” he said, “are some of the foreigners and toughs.”

Her first thought was for Durran, and she uttered it. Would he come out through that gateway?

"I have sent some committee members to look after him," answered Manning, coldly. "He will be safer than if he had a guard of watchmen."

She felt the constraint which had come between them, and, with a nervousness which was most unusual with her, fingered the wilted roses in her belt. One broke off and fell upon the sidewalk. The car came around the corner above, and, glad to see it approach, she made a movement to go out into the street. She gave Manning her hand as she said good-by. She could feel the force which was holding his steady.

When she took her seat in the car she looked back. Manning had turned to go down where the angry crowd was gathered about the stockade gate. He was closing a large leathern pocket case and returning it to his pocket. Something made her glance at the spot where the wilted yellow rose had fallen. It was gone. And she understood — beyond all hope of mistake.

In an upper window of the Kemble cottage, overlooking the corner where the two had stood, Mrs. Kemble, hidden by a dingy lace curtain, was knotting the cord of the shade with fingers which trembled and were very cold.

CHAPTER VIII

Much of the disputes and consequently many of the inconveniences of this world arise from the strange difficulty that men find in understanding each others' meaning. — *Lord Lyttleton's Letters.*

SOOT-SOAKED roofs and a narrow, gray street were the only prospect from Tennant's office. And Durrant, not finding it pleasant, went from it back to Tennant's desk. The latter, according to the man who guarded the door, might be counted upon to return within the next quarter of an hour. In the meanwhile Durrant took up a newspaper which lay upon the desk. It was not one that he himself was in the habit of reading, its policy being that of catering to the least desirable element in the populace, and he was not a little surprised to see it here. The front page, however, told him at first glance why Tennant had found it interesting. The company president was not indifferent to public opinion, might even indeed have been suspected of being sensitive to it; and Durrant, as he glanced over the two columns of rather cleverly handled abuse, reflected that his superior could hardly have relished it. On the strength of being head of a corporation which paid out many millions in wages annually, and upon which more than a hundred thousand souls

were directly and indirectly dependant, Tennant was, he knew, prone to regard himself as an institution of the land, as a blessing to labor, and not the enemy thereof which some endeavored to make him appear.

While he was still reading the article, Tennant came in.

"It seems—" he said, as he laid his hat upon a table and held out his hand to the manager—"it seems that the union thug who murders and maims and sows dynamite sticks broadcast, is an agreeable character compared to the man who works up in a successful business and attends to that." He motioned toward the paper which Durran had thrown on a chair. There was a half smile on the thin lips under the thin, gray mustache, and he betrayed no heat or exasperation. Yet Durran believed that he was intensely annoyed, and it was justifiable, in a great degree, that he should be so. For, after all, he had done much good with his wealth and power, and had put time to planning and carrying out his charities,—time which most men so occupied would have begrudged. In the beginning of his affluence he had attempted paternalism, but the workmen's attitude toward that had not been encouraging. Since there is nothing more exasperating to the man who believes he has rights than to bestow upon him favors, they had rather resented any distant approach to feudal relationship with the master. They had let it be

understood that Tennant might look after his own interests — and probably would — while they could take care of their own.

He had built a model tenement and several cottages, and had seen them, in a year, far greater wrecks of dilapidation than any houses which the workingmen built for themselves or rented from some mere speculator. He had worked for and even contributed to the proper sanitation of Staunton and others of the steel-mill towns in which he was interested, and had met with almost complete lack of thanks or appreciation. To feel himself compelled by conscience to gratitude is not pleasing to the American or him who has imbibed the national spirit to even a small extent. He is restive under a sense of obligation, in whatsoever class he be found. Thereafter Tennant had decided to confine his benefits to more or less worthy individual cases, and to caring for the sick and injured. He had raised a permanent relief and hospital fund in the company, contributing to it largely from his own private purse. The motives for even this, the paper which Durran had just put aside turned to a subject for jeers and quibbling.

“The spirit of the American press is pretty generally a nasty thing,” said Durran, answering Tennant’s particularizing with a generality. “It is vulgar and contemptible, cringing to one side or another.”

Tennant went to his desk chair and sitting in it

looked into a pigeonhole. He took forth a scrap of paper, unfolded it, and held it out. "Clement turned this in a while since," he said. "It was passed at a secret session of the advisory committee yesterday afternoon."

Durran, still standing, read it aloud: "Under no circumstances will we permit these mills to be run by non-union men. We have already selected men to seek employment at the mills as often as they can. These emissaries of ours are instructed, and have been sworn, to carry out our orders in consummation of the policy agreed upon. When we are sure that there is no longer any hope for us in these mills, our men will place explosives where they will do the most effectual damage. We must either control or wreck the property."

Durran looked up. "You do not think, I suppose, that this is worth the untidy paper it is written upon?"

Tennant could see no reason for disbelieving it. "It is the basis of their whole policy—the whole union policy. Inoculate them once with the union virus and each one of them becomes a murderer and an anarchist in his heart."

"Isn't that rather sweeping when you consider that you are speaking of about a twelfth or more of our voting population, who are for the most part average good citizens?" inquired Durran. "But this thing,"

he went on, touching the piece of paper in his hand, "is a fabrication, on the face of it. I am not doubting that there are plenty of men over there who would like to blow up the plant, and us, too. But most of the committee members are decent fellows. And the ones who aren't would never be able to get this passed. It may have been proposed, but you may be sure that it wasn't approved. Manning would have resigned his chairmanship if it had been."

"There has," said Tennant, "been dynamite used at the mills before." He spoke of the fight in the past, as Durran knew. "It could hardly be repeated,— " the latter put it away,—"all the better and older unions have educated themselves away from that sort of thing,—at any rate among the accredited leaders. Of course the rank and file can't be answered for even yet. But this document," he smiled ironically, "is supposed to be the official utterance of leaders. Now here, though," he said, "is something genuine. I received it last evening."

It was a note from Manning written on paper stamped with the advisory committee's address, and it set forth briefly that a rumor was circulating to the effect that several hundred men were to be brought into the plant from distant points, and that an attempt was to be made to start the mills with those and such non-union men as were now in Staunton. It advised that trouble would almost inevitably result. "If we

attempt to peaceably run our own mills entirely within our legal rights," observed Tennant, with calm cynicism, "there will be trouble. It is certainly a curious condition of affairs."

"The other swing of the pendulum from the not so remote period when the home of the peasant might be laid waste and even his body sacrificed in the settling of some private tiff between his liege and some other noble. The conception of right divine is undergoing transition," suggested Durran, a taste for the philosophy of history getting the better of prudence and business wisdom.

Tennant chose to appear to ignore it. "What is to be expected with the press taking that attitude? —" he glanced toward the news sheet, — "and congressmen uttering such sentiments as that 'property is held subject to the correlative rights of those without whose services it would be valueless'?"

"They have the law with them in all they have done so far—the men," — Durran brought it back to the actual facts. "Manning has been as shrewd as we usually are ourselves about keeping within limits."

"Law?" Tennant scoffed at it. "Mob law, abetted by corrupt officials!"

"Well, they look on ours largely as plutocratic law, upheld by venal courts." He returned once more to the concrete. "But this note of Manning's is meant, as I take it, for a move to avoid trouble, to prepare us,

— not as a threat. It may be that he will be overruled by the majority, but I am inclined to think he will do his best for peace himself. He is not a common agitator.”

“There is but one Manning, and Durran is his prophet,” said Tennant, suavely.

He lighted a cigar and bent over to throw the match into the waste-basket. His office was scrupulously neat. “I am sorry you don’t smoke,” he said. Then he returned to the central topic. “I saw an English despatch in the papers the other day,” he said. “It remarked that we should probably have to call out the militia — ‘concerning which there was some doubt if it would come.’ I entertain doubts myself. An article in the association’s journal yesterday gave evidence of the law-abiding and patriotic spirit of the union men in speaking of the national guard as a state organization used solely in the interests of capital, to break strikes and shoot union sympathizers.”

Durran nodded. “We have seen that the case in at least one state, too — with more than a suspicion that the militia was paid by the capitalist. However, that evil attitude is fortunately being discouraged as a policy by the leaders. Certainly, though,” he added, reverting to the present situation, “you can’t call out the militia against men who — like the little boy — ‘ain’t doing nothing.’”

“They will do something,” prognosticated Tennant,

confidently, "as soon as the new men are brought in." He drew the end of his cigar to a red glow. "The gods and Manning have made them mad; their destruction will be only a matter of time. They were mad once before," he added, "and it resulted in men who had been getting fabulous wages having to come down to a reasonable level."

"Wasn't it rather" — Durran put the question as in a spirit of amicable discussion—"the objection to the prospect of the come-down which induced the madness? That is how it reads in the records of the time and in congressional reports."

He was perfectly conscious that Tennant was already annoyed with him, and that he was, by every word he now said, adding to the annoyance in a manner hardly justifiable in a subordinate. But the argumentative was a strong trait in his character. Tennant managed to arouse it almost invariably. Durran prided himself upon his innate democracy, but it was not entirely equal to submitting tamely to the domineering personality of a man risen from the working classes. Tennant was, in point of fact, not a little given to trying to exact homage and subservience from his underlings. Most of these acquiesced; but Durran, while he was ready to run the plant as the president should dictate, was not prepared to think and speak after the same fashion, — neither to hold his tongue. It was Tennant who had begun a discussion off the lines of business,

to which Durran himself would have preferred to keep strictly. The latter foresaw that he would probably have to tender his resignation from his present position before very long. He did not greatly care, as he could command another as good immediately, and he felt himself critical and a good deal opposed to the policy of the company. The only drawback was the fact that it was Beatrice's father he was vexing.

He had been standing all the while and walking slowly back and forth over a few feet of the dark green carpet. He drew a chair near to the desk and sat down.

"The unions," said Tennant, who was becoming more angry than he outwardly showed, and was, as a consequence, guilty of unwisdom, "are going to ruin this country and bring it to where England was in the sixteenth century when the guilds had control and made so many restrictions and manipulated prices to such an extent that industry was driven out of the chartered towns."

"On the other hand," remarked Durran, "there are those who hold that what is going to bring us to a bad end is—well, the idea which is exemplified in our selling steel rails to foreign business for almost half as much as we market them in this country."

Tennant reached for an ash receiver and knocked the ashes from his cigar. There was still on his

lips the thin smile of half amusement. "It is how we have got the commercial supremacy of the world and an unexampled prosperity, however," he said smoothly. "As for the abstract morality of it, or the long-run view, I am not concerning myself with that. But I am ready to profit by the conditions which allow it,—even to further them." That he had done his utmost to further them, time and again, was a knowledge which Durran shared with the public. "However," said Tennant, sitting erect in his chair, putting down the unfinished cigar, and signifying by every line of his spare, active figure that an end had come to objectless discussion, "this is not to the purpose." It was a chief cause for his now scarcely covert annoyance that he allowed himself to fall into—indeed, always provoked—these passages with Durran. He considered his weaknesses very few. That this was one of them irritated him. Yet—since it is rarely with one's self that one is displeased because of a weakness, but with him to whom one manifests it—the sight of Durran present, or the thought of him absent, had of late roused more and more antagonism. "And now," he said, a trifle curtly, and with the tone of one who recalls an inferior to his place, "I believe that what you wished to see me about was the plans for bringing in the new men?"

CHAPTER IX

There is no man whose soul and will and meaning
Stand forth as outward things for all to see.

— SOPHOCLES. *Antigone*.

THE red brick house in which Manning lived had been, seventy-five years before, a decent farmhouse overlooking a green-banked, lonely river. Since then it had been repaired as it fell into decay, and altered to meet changing requirements. So that where had once been a wide staircase was now a narrow flight in a narrow passage. Yet the first Dutch farm mistress could hardly have kept the place more clean than did the excellent German woman who was the present possessor.

Manning's room was at the front, with an outlook upon a row of small structures across the street, well overgrown with Virginia creeper and ivy. The complete lack of anything beyond necessary furniture, and piles of books, papers, and pamphlets, made the room a source of much satisfaction to the proprietress, whose other lodgers were less austere in their tastes, and more tawdry. The walls here were freshly whitened once a year, and were devoid of any decorations. The windows had no curtains, but

only green shades, and a large desk table stood in the middle of the bare floor. Altogether—except for the painted iron bunk—the room presented much the appearance of an office uncompromisingly for work.

Manning sat at the desk now, resting one arm upon it, and looking out through the open window, not seeing, however, the green-covered walls across the street.

The rumor was spreading and gaining credence that Tennant was soon to bring new men to Staunton and start up the mills with inexperienced hands. It was a rumor which Manning himself saw no reason to doubt—the only one, indeed, to have been expected. It was not to have been supposed that after a few weeks, or even months, the company would meekly open its gates again, and take back its old men upon any terms these should choose to set. Yet the report that the black sheep were to be imported had appeared to strike most of the Staunton men with all the force of the completely unexpected, and to have called forth a hot indignation as if at an unmerited outrage—one which was not to be borne by manhood without retaliation, bloodshed, and wrecking. Those, and they were nearly all, who had been too short-sighted to fully realize that the company would try to replace them were now as wanting in vision for what would inevitably be to themselves and their cause the con-

sequences of violence. That the words which Clement had written out for Tennant the afternoon before had been only the substance of a proposed resolution, and not a passed one, had required effort on the part of Manning himself and the few conservative, level-headed men upon whom he felt able to rely. The spirit which the resolution had manifested was widespread. It was becoming the open assertion that the company should not run its mills, that any men who might be brought in should be driven off with the Mosaic persuasion, "Else thou shalt surely die." A self-constituted committee had taken it upon itself to make secret visits to the trainmen of the lines running out of Staunton and to threaten them with shooting if they were to carry steel from the plant. A good deal of this Manning knew to be due to Lockhart's influence, the latter being about again and as active as his condition permitted.

The reaction from the efforts to put down the temper of lawlessness, the inevitable realization of the want of common intelligence with which he had to deal, had brought upon Manning a fit of tired and angry disgust. It had been shown to him more unmistakably than ever that the average human creature, come to the age where reason and philosophy might justly be expected, plays the game of life with all the unwillingness to accept consequences that is shown by the peevish boy who having lost his

marbles "for keeps," cries and fights to have them back again. The men who, like himself, had seen fit to declare for the union, and who should have known as well as he what the results would be, were now ready to struggle and beat against the Fate which held the privileges they had put up on the chance of forfeit.

In his contemptuous anger at the cowardice, he had thought of throwing over the leadership. Then the power he possessed to judge and estimate others with considerable exactness had made him see with as uncompromising a vision that to shirk this responsibility which he had accepted and sought would be that thing itself which he condemned. He had argued it out with himself as he had sat at the desk looking at the vine tracing on the gray wooden fronts. And he saw it as the only course creditable to himself that he should remain in command—whether to success or defeat,—through mutiny, defection, or desertion, if those should come. And he was forced to believe that they would.

Having made his determination, he tipped back his chair and, clasping his hands behind his head, fell to thinking of much in the present which had no connection with the thickening troubles in the advisory committee. As the thought of those had led him to the future, the thought of this—which had no future for him—led backward to the past. He took his

hands from behind his head, and getting a ring of keys from his pocket unlocked a drawer of the desk. A black tin despatch-box was in the drawer. He lifted it out and unlocked it also.

There were papers and letters of businesslike appearance, a little packet of clippings, and a photograph case of crimson velvet. He took out the packet and, untying it, looked at the clippings. They were pictures of Beatrice Tennant cut from magazines and journals. One or two had appeared within the last year, a couple more at the time she had come back from school. She was given as a type of her country's fair womanhood. In the later ones the gravity and self-possession, the sense of responsibility, had become more apparent on her face than they were in those taken at the close of her school days. He laid them together again and put them back. Then he took out the velvet case. There was in it the tintype of a little girl with oval face and folded hands, and a long, heavy braid of hair, pulled forward to hang over the child's narrow shoulders. Beatrice had had it taken with some of the pocket-money her father was then beginning to give her liberally. And she had brought it to his mother one day not long before Tennant had moved away from the town to the city. After his mother's death Manning had kept it, at first because it had been his mother's, but later on because it was a picture of Beatrice. He held it in the hollow of his

work-hardened palm and looked at it. Then he closed the case and put it into the box, locking it away again. And even at the moment there was the sound of pattering, bare feet coming toward his room. It seemed to him like the footfalls of children, but no children lived in the house. A hand fumbled for the knob, found it, and opened the door.

The amenity of knocking did not enter into Nettie Farraday's conception of things. And it was she who stood in the dark hall, looking into the room. In her arms was the baby, and the two small boys hung close behind her. It was several days since Manning had seen them, and it seemed to him that all — and chiefly Nettie — looked more cruelly thin than ever. Nettie's frock hung as if on a wire frame, and her bare legs and forearms were mere bones. Something in the expression of her face made him jump up and go to her. He took the baby out of her arms. She was gasping for breath, and as she walked seemed not quite sure of keeping her balance. He lifted a chair in one hand and put it near his own for her. She sat in it and got her breath. The two boys brought up either side.

Manning questioned her, but he knew without her answer what the trouble was. She pointed to the baby still in his arms. "Never you mind about me," she said, "look at that kid. What's the matter with her? She's starvin'."

He did look at it. It stared up at him dully, with solemn eyes that were red-lidded and lifeless. The skin was tight and blue across its large forehead. Its poor little legs looked brittle enough to snap. There was none of the winsome chubbiness of a luckier babyhood. It was an ugly small thing. He could not help thinking of that, much as he pitied it. He gave it back to Nettie, and it went with the same docility shown in allowing itself to be given to him—the docility of a pathetic and premature life weariness. “You ought to have come to me long before this,” he told Nettie. He got his hat from where it lay on the mantelshelf. “Wait for me,” he added, and went out of the room. Nettie supposed that he had gone for food, and she sat wiping the damp of weakness from her face upon her sleeve.

The credit of Farraday had not been such as to admit of a great deal of stretching, and a laborer who was the father of four children and had recently been put to the expense of a funeral was not one to have savings against a day of emergency. Within the last week the stores had showed him the amounts of his bills and had refused to add to them further. Then he had borrowed all that friends little better provided than himself had been able to lend, and had limped to the shops with cash in his cracked and toil-scarred hands. He had laid in supplies which, sparingly managed, would, he calculated, suffice for the

children through several days. Nettie's frugality drew them out a scant meal or two longer yet. Thereafter the family had lived by those means which were death to any but such as have been always accustomed to looking on less than a couple of dollars a day as a competence for the support of a large and periodically increasing family. The households of the higher paid workmen still threw away into the garbage boxes something which Nettie could use. But the limit of her endurance had been reached that morning. The garbage of the day before had yielded only half a loaf of very dry bread.

She had sat on the sidewalk at the gutter's edge, with another girl, the child of a German open-hearth furnaceman, who was not yet at the end of a good-sized savings-bank account. The girl had been eating a sausage. Nettie had watched from the corners of her eyes like some little starved cur, too scared to snatch the food it is dying for want of; but when she had felt that she was being watched, she had affected supreme indifference. The sausage finished, the German child had suggested a game of hop-scotch, the design for which was already chalked upon the pavement. Nettie had given to the baby the scrap of yesterday's bread-find which should have been her own portion. She had eaten nothing for twenty-four hours, and little for days previous to that. She did not feel in the least like playing, but she would not have had the other girl

suspect that. The strain of jumping and shouting had, nevertheless, been too much for her. She had stopped short in the midst of the game, looking straight in front of her with glazed eyes, had staggered once or twice, turned around, and flung forward on her face.

The German mother, called by her frightened daughter, had come out from the tenement and, carrying Nettie into her room, had brought her back to consciousness. "Hoongry?" she asked. She did not know much English, but she knew the meaning of Nettie's condition, and she was willing from the generosity of the heart under her ample bosom to give food—though food was of infinite value, and her own children might yet have to suffer.

Nettie's defensive pride was the master still, and enabled her to refuse with a perfectly ungracious contempt. "Naw," she said, taking herself out of the kindly fat arms with a jerk. "I got plenty to eat." And she had gone out. But she was afraid to play any more. Instead she went into the one room in which the five of them now lived and cooked and slept. Since the mills had shut down the other mere closet which they had rented until then had been given up. The baby was there, on a folded blanket which lay on the bare boards. It had been asleep when she had left it, but was now awake and whimpering weakly. In the light of her own recent experience Nettie saw what it was near.

She had thought of Manning more than once since she had begun to be hungry. He was a big and important person, far and away above such as her father in the world. Yet he was connected in her mind with cakes and bakeries, and she had a vague notion that he could do or get what he pleased. She thought of him now again and remembered his relationship to themselves. It would not be the same as taking food from a foreign woman, and a next-door neighbor at that, which, with a premature worldly wisdom, Nettie felt made it worse. She gathered the baby in her arms, and finding the two boys, who were in an alleyway, went off in search of her cousin. It had been well for her that he was in his room. As a rule, he was seldom there in the daytime just now. A man whom she had met, coming out of the gate of the erstwhile farmhouse, had told her that Manning's quarters were on the third floor in front. She had been dismayed at the thought of the height, but had climbed to it nevertheless, depositing the baby and sitting down herself at every dozen steps.

She looked around the room as she sat waiting. It did not interest her. There were no prints or chromolithographs, or pictures from police and sporting papers on the wall, such as she had papered their own room with in the tenement. There was almost nothing excepting the books and papers piled on the big desk and on the mantelshelf. Nettie had had just enough

experience of books to hate them. She had gone to a public school for a while. But her mother's death, and the family cares which had devolved upon her thereafter, had cut short the education she objected to.

Manning came in, bringing a bottle of milk, a bag of crackers, and a pitcher of hot water, which he had obtained from the landlady's private kitchen. Milk, well diluted, and crackers were the two things which had occurred to him as likely to be best for stomachs weak with emptiness. And even those he saw to it that they ate slowly. He put Nettie through a catechism the while. Where was her father?

"Lookin' for work," she said; "been lookin' for it ever since you lost him his job."

He let the accusation pass. What had they been living upon?

Nettie told him. "Mostly nothin' for two days, an' mighty little before that."

He surveyed her critically. "It seems to me," he commented, "that you look worse than the others."

"Oah!" said Nettie, with sovereign scorn, and protruding her under lip in a fashion which was not winning.

Manning insisted. "Why is it?" he asked.

"Oah, I don't," she denied.

"I believe you have been giving the baby your food," he accused.

"Well?" she challenged, but her eyes shifted guilt-

ily. "I don't care. She's smaller'n me. She ain't so strong."

"And before that —" he said, still sternly, for he knew that any show of feeling or sympathy would make her unmanageably restive — "before that you went without your fair share so that the children and your father could have more."

Nettie flared up. Perhaps she had done it with the children. She didn't care if she had. "But you ain't goin' to say that dad et up our meals. He ain't had one at home for two weeks. He says he gets 'em over in the city when he's huntin' a job; but he's lyin'. I know it. He stumps 'round all day on that game leg of hisn," she recounted indignantly, "an' at night he's about dead. Say," she demanded abruptly, "when are they goin' to bring in the men, an' start up the mills?"

He answered that he did not know; and he was conscious of feeling guilty before this brave and burdened little person, that he meant to do all he could to prevent the very thing to which she looked forward as the chance for her crippled father to get back to work, for herself and the small flock which depended upon her to be rescued from want. But his justification lay in doing what lay within his power to save children yet unborn from the possibility of a life like hers.

He inquired as to her plans of livelihood for the immediate future.

"*I* can get on somehow, —" she put herself outside

of the question, — “but I want you to feed these here.” She moved her arm with the gesture of a Cornelia. “They’re kids. They can’t hustle.”

It was evident that she took her big cousin’s means to be sufficient to meet not only his own needs, but theirs as well. Manning knew the state of his affairs better. It was a good deal of a charge, this that she was putting upon him so confidently, but he did not see his way to escaping it; certainly it was not to be laid off on Nettie’s sharp, bent little shoulders. For the present the four of them had to be fed, and he would undertake it himself as long as he could before calling it to Lester’s attention. He could not send them to his own boarding-house; they would never be allowed to put their ragged, unkempt little bodies across the threshold there. He remembered a cheap restaurant down by the railroad tracks, around the corner from the tenement. He spoke of it to Nettie. “You can all go in there twice a day and get a square meal,” he told her. “I’ll talk to the man about it and make it all right.”

“I’ll send *them*,” she said resolutely, nodding her head at the boys and the baby.

“You’ll go yourself,” answered Manning, considerably more resolute still, “or none of you shall.” She agreed to it upon those terms. “Go there for your supper to-night,” he ordered. “And now—I’m busy, and you had better run along, all of you youngsters.”

She got her family together, dragging the baby to her shoulder with a practised hitch, and they filed out. Manning disposed of the remains of their meal, which were only the bottle, the jug, the paper bag, and some crumbs. Then he went to work on a file of papers. After a few minutes there was once more the patter of feet and a fumbling at the knob. Nettie put in her head and peered at him from under her matted hair. "Thanks," she said. And the door was shut again.

CHAPTER X

According to Bentham there is but one motive possible, the pursuit of our own enjoyment.

— LECKY. *History of European Morals.*

IT is near upon a score of centuries now that humanity has been learning the lesson of that certain beggar named Lazarus, and the teaching has accomplished this much,—that we shudder at the thought of those kings and nobles who drank and loved deep with only a floor of stone between themselves and the starving captives, gangrene gnawed within their dungeons. We marvel that in days so recent as to be almost of the present, they danced in the Orangerie while the Bastille fell, and that twenty-three theatres could have been filled during the nights which heaped dead bodies in the Paris streets. Yet we have still to recognize the irony of the charity ball and fair, or to even find it unpleasant that we drive through streets where loiter the saddest misery and want, and pass, perchance, up an aisle between two rows of the homeless, the hungry and criminal, to enter in all our pride the halls of festivity.

The city was at the time so full of those who were out of work, of men, women, and children with no roof

to cover their heads through the mild or raw spring nights, that Tennant's guests passed up such an aisle as they drove into his grounds.

The light of the branching bronze lamps above the gates showed to curious or angry eyes the vague, pale-gowned forms of the women in the carriages. The price of the costly raiment clothing any one of them would have served to lodge and feed for the night the whole of the little crowd whose existence they scarcely observed, though they saw momentarily the peering faces and craned necks, and heard the voices which commented or expostulated with the policemen and footmen who were keeping the way clear.

Tennant had seen fit to consider the occasion of his daughter's birthday one suitable for giving a ball, which it was his intention to have of a magnificence theretofore unsurpassed in the city. Beatrice had not attempted to dissuade him, recognizing that the only arguments she could have advanced would not have merited the name after all, and would have been quite untenable against his matter of fact. He would have answered—and with a good show of reason—to the effect that there was no sufficient cause, sentimental or otherwise, to prevent his entertaining certain among his friends, merely because some few thousand men had elected, at the instigation of bullying agitators, to give up well-paid positions in a company which treated them

fairly. An equal degree of weak-brained folly upon his own part, of inability to keep hold upon an excellent thing, would have very shortly brought himself to want. And in such an event it was not to be supposed that the workmen would forego their own smokers and fancy-dress dances, out of consideration for his merited misfortunes.

Beatrice, who knew the tenor of his unassailable logic by experience, had known this hypothetical reply without evoking it. She had realized that she would have nothing more worthy than a somewhat gratuitous sentiment to put against it. And sentiment being a volatile essence, apt to vanish when exposed to the cold air of that which is known as common sense, she exposed hers before her father as seldom as before the rest of her world.

As a consequence, the proposed ball was become a fact in the act of being accomplished, and several hundred people were in the Tennant mansion. Beatrice, standing beside her father, received them. And Valerio watched her from a point of vantage, and over the head of a young woman to whom he talked the while.

The theory of democracy he, as a man abreast of his age, was familiar with, but this practice of the results it made possible was still a never ending source of wonder and surprise to him. In the courts and palaces of different lands he had seen many

women engaged as Miss Tennant was at the moment. Yet he was unable to recall one whose perfection in grace and readiness had been more entire, whose whole appearance had presented a more exquisite balance of taste and individuality.

And Tennant himself was better than many a father of daughters rightly proud of their ancestry. At the distance from which Valerio observed it, there was only perhaps a rather too careful self-repression which betrayed uncertainty as to his ability to be at ease and the while correct. Yet that repression had become so much a second nature that it counterfeited acceptably the dignity of the natural.

And the fiction that the severe, grotesque lines, the black-and-white of evening dress, inevitably bring out the signs of plebeian birth, was set at naught. Tennant looked better in this than in his business suit.

Valerio, with a smile—which the girl misunderstood and attributed to her own words—recalled a bit of his Old Testament knowledge. The great king had showed again his wisdom, when he had chosen the iron-worker as suitable to rise to sit upon a throne.

It was a work with an inherent honorableness in its very suggestion, like that of tilling the soil. There was about it nothing petty, belittling, cheapening to manhood.

During all the early part of the evening, while he waited until Beatrice's duties should have left her free,

he talked with men and women, who, if they none of them interested him individually, at least did so greatly as studies in a type and a condition.

There were among them some few who had means or manners of more than a generation's cultivation. But they were greatly in the minority. Generally speaking, all the beauty and fashion represented here in these new halls of new riches was a thing of mushroom growth. Most of the fathers he knew either personally or by report and sight. Their origin was, almost without exception, such as Tennant's own, or what seemed to him worse (though doubtless to them, better), they had been peddling salesmen, petty clerks, and the like. Few presented Tennant's good appearance, to be sure, yet they were passable. Their daughters and in some cases even their wives and sons were still more so. He talked with the daughter of Woolmer, he with whose portrait the Spanish artist had amused himself. The magnate had been a butcher's clerk, and was now an irremediably, coarse-fibred, fraudulent man, low in breeding as in morals. His child Evelyn was one to whom the most fastidious could—at any rate upon casual acquaintance—have taken no exception. It was not, though, Valerio philosophized, democracy and republicanism which had done all this that he saw about him. It was sheer plutocracy. In times gone by wealth had been only the incident, the corollary, perhaps, of power. His own

ancestors had been rich — but because they were strong and great. Now wealth was itself the power. These people about him, who had it, revered it, filled their souls with it. So for that matter did the less successful masses. Had it not been said of the people of Hannibal's day and city that they tolerated oligarchy only because each hoped to attain to it? That was the principle at work here, producing a travesty of democracy.

Even in the company of the coke magnate's daughter he felt his own aloofness, his want of community in understanding and viewpoint. He was not in a congenial atmosphere until he was able to be with Beatrice. She, too, was indeed the daughter of a man of the people, and newly enriched, yet she had in herself bridged many generations, in that she regarded this world's goods as a means and not an end.

As he took her away from the group with which she had been standing, he saw the smile fade from her face. But it had been a smile of effort, and this, he felt, was the seriousness of contentment and relief. A fine perception made him know that complete silence upon his part would — as implying an intimacy to which she had not yet admitted his right — irk her even more than the forced speech and laughter she had been obliged to with the others; so he talked to her quietly and easily. It was, as he had let her discover before this, his faculty to be able to speak simply of

many things which were not in themselves simple or trivial. He did so now as they sat in one corner of the same drawing-room in which he had first seen her as mistress of her own home. Half hidden from those who passed by a table banked with pink roses, she rested in a big arm-chair which made for her figure a setting of buff and gold.

The quick attempt to seem not to have seen her upon the part of many who went through the room made her understand more plainly than ever that her engagement to Valerio was taken as accomplished or about to be so.

She knew that she was allowing herself to gradually drift into a position where an engagement was the only possible result, and it was coming to seem to her that it was one she could be well pleased with. When she was with Valerio she was always contented and satisfied. Now she was hardly aware that she had sat for a long while, reposefully listening and sometimes answering without having to exert herself. When Durran came to claim her she was sorry.

"It is more than half an hour that you have been there with Valerio," he said, as soon as they were alone. "As you are not given to making yourself conspicuous, I am, and most of us are, coming to the conclusion that you are going to marry him."

She knew that he felt himself justified by the intimate friendship of the past five years to comment upon

her actions and to express himself frankly. He had done so often before, and she had not taken exception to it. Now, however, she felt a covert resentment.

"Do you know," she said, "if the cases were reversed, I believe it would not so much as occur to Prince Valerio to question my behavior, even indirectly."

Durran looked at her leisurely. "That is not like you," he said critically, "to make unpleasant speeches. But you are hypersensitive because you are conscious of doing something unworthy of yourself. If you are going to marry Valerio, it is not because you love him. If you are not going to, he has no visible reason for knowing it."

He waited for an answer, but receiving none he spoke again himself. "I dare say you are trying to make yourself think that I am impertinent," he suggested.

She smiled slowly, moving her head in negative. "Why should one, after all, resent from a friend a truth less severe than one tells one's self?" she said. He in his turn made no reply.

"Must we dance?" he asked; "or may we go to the conservatory instead?"

She felt a disinclination to give him a further chance to have her alone. Yet she had really no good excuse for refusing.

The conservatory was upon the third and topmost floor of the house, something after the manner of a roof garden. But Durran was not to have it only for

himself and Beatrice. Others were before them, in numbers. A row of French windows opened upon a balcony, however, and no one was there, the women perhaps fearing the fall of soot for their light gowns. Should they go out? he asked her, holding wide a window. She passed through, and he followed her over to the railing in silence. Then he spoke again.

"Beatrice," he said, "I don't want to annoy you, and I have no right to any confidence, but it means a good deal to me to know whether or not you intend to marry that man. Do you?"

"Yes," she answered, "I think I do."

There was a silence. "Then you are engaged to him?" he said, in another tone, a forced one of civil commonplace. And he started a stereotyped congratulation.

"No," she stopped him, "you are mistaken. I am not engaged to him."

He turned to her quickly. "Then think it over still longer, Beatrice, before you finally decide," he urged earnestly. "Of course you will believe that I am considering myself. I am—naturally—to an extent, but I am considering you primarily. You do not love him and you do not love me. You will not take me. Why should you take him? Unless you are selling yourself for a title? What has he to offer that I have not—excepting always the title?"

She smiled as she stood looking off into the night.

"I have wondered myself," she said. "Those things have no explanation, have they? But — I have begun, of late, to feel that endeavor is not worth while. His coming has fitted with that mood. I am tired, I think, of the strenuous American atmosphere — and he has about him that of a land which has accomplished its destiny and can take repose."

He did not seem to find that a reason. "Your father is not forcing you to the marriage, is he?" he asked. "I don't think you could be coerced."

"No," she said. "It is not that, though father would be glad of — the alliance." She put it mockingly.

"Then is it because Valerio loves you? I give him credit for loving you quite apart from your money. Are you going to marry him because you are half sorry for him? Two-thirds of the marriages in the world are made in that way — upon the one side or the other. But that kind will not do for you, particularly if the man is a foreigner."

"You do not seem to be able to believe," Beatrice answered, "that I can, that I do, care for him more than I have yet for any one."

"More than you could care for any one?" he demanded.

Beatrice had recourse to one of the translated Gallicisms she sometimes used. He heard a long breath which was close to a sigh. "Ah! — that —" she said.

"You do not know what love is," he told her.

She thought suddenly of a face into which, all unprepared, she had chanced to look up a few days before, of a voice which had spoken for her safety, of a hand that had made her feel the strain it was under not to tremble as it took hers. "At least—neither do you, John," she said.

"Leave me out of it then, if you think that," he said, vexed. "But for your own sake, Beatrice, don't marry until you do love. Or, if you are bound to—then let it be some decent American and not a Latin who thinks, like all his breed, that woman is made for his amusement."

"If the Latin thinks she is made for his amusement, the American seems to think she is made to be amused," she said with a placidity which did not hide some intent. "I have never been able to decide which was the lower ideal."

She lifted her bare and rounded arm and pointed through the darkness in the direction of Staunton. "What can that be?" she asked.

Durran watched for a minute with growing concern. "It is a fire," he said. There was no plant in operation anywhere in that vicinity, as both of them knew. It could not therefore be a blast. "It may not be the mills," Durran added, "but again—it may. I will go over at once. Don't say anything about it to your father, and I will let you know what it is as soon as I can."

They turned back into the house and Durran went as quickly as he might without drawing attention. Beatrice followed more slowly down the centre of the great staircase with its tall lamps and its banks of plants and flowers. The long train of her gown dragged heavily back behind her, the light showing in the gold threads woven through it in fleur-de-lis, and on the topaz jewels about her neck and arms. The halls were deserted, and she was quite alone. The sound of the music came up to her.

CHAPTER XI

When discords and quarrels and factions are carried on openly and audaciously, it is a sign that the reverence of government is lost. — BACON.

A WIND had sprung up with the beginning of the night, a dry, gusty wind that soughed in the trees with the sound of a bow drawn over the deadened strings of a violin.

There was a hot, yellow quarter moon sinking toward the west. A row of tall poplars which ran beside the road swayed and rattled. The road itself, vague and white, led out into the country, but here, where the trees were, were also houses set back in yards and scattered among empty lots.

A shadowy crowd of men and women were coming out from the more thickly settled part of Staunton. They were very silent, and where they straggled at the edges, children ran to keep up.

At a certain one of the empty lots they stopped, and the foremost turned in. Two men carried between them something that had the look of a covered stretcher. They laid it on the ground, and, taking up the huddled thing which was upon it, carried it to where a tall post could be seen set up in the ground. It was an inert,

limp figure in the form of a man. The two lashed it to the post with pieces of wire, the arms and legs hanging loose. There was a pile of dry brush near by. It had evidently been stacked ready, and now it was carried to the foot of the stake and heaped, — the women and children helping with the rest, still moving silently and stealthily. When any one spoke, the voice was dropped and low, and the words were usually in a foreign tongue, or in English foreign-phrased. The dry brush crackled, and the wind whined in the poplar tops. But there was no noise. A match was struck, a tiny flame which lighted a large hand redly and transparently for an instant, then was blown out. The next match was held behind a cap and was touched to a torch, — a stick wrapped in oil-soaked cotton fleece. It flared up, and the one who held it started to the brush pile. He threw it among the dry branches. They caught in little sparks and tongues, at first, and then the fire began to snap and roar. The light showed the figure tied to the post. It was of straw and rags roughly stuffed into an old suit of clothes and surmounted by that badge of the patrician known to the proletariat as the "plug hat." A sheet of brown paper was nailed above it, and stencilled in big letters was Tennant's name.

The crowd was still quiet. For all the sound that it made no one a few hundred feet from its outskirts could have known that it was there. Even when the

feet, with their dangling pair of worn-out patent leather shoes, began to burn, and the fire crept up the legs, and an odor of scorching woollen went strongly out from it, there was only a low snarl. It shivered evilly through the night. The sparks were beginning to fly in the wind, and the crowd pressed back from the roaring pile. Gradually, soundlessly, as the wind grew stronger and carried the flames in long streamers and sparks that whirled by and away, the post was burning, and the figure was half gone. Before the head had caught, when only the shoulders and the arms were left, the post leaned slowly forward, and then fell. It crushed down into the pyre, and a hiss of sparks went up. The brightened flames lighted the figures of those who were in the front, the night beyond making the shadows black.

There was a rustle of finality, and the movement of dispersing began. Little more remained to be seen save the burning out of embers. And having performed the rite, the mock sacrifice which their lowering temper had demanded, they were anxious to get back to the town and scatter. They feared being recognized by the neighbors whom the glare had now attracted, or being caught by the patrols whom they had already been at much pains to elude, — worse still, by some committee member who would make trouble for them. To not one did it occur to think of, as a possible informer, the big Irishman who had been foremost

among them, who had encouraged the idea and furthered its carrying out. The man was Clement, and he and Laura Halloran were among the last to leave the vacant lot. Having seen the crowd depart, they, instead of going by the road, started in the opposite direction. The girl slipped her hand into that of the man who was the object of her unhappy and possessing love, and stumbled along over the uneven ground. As they came to the broken fence through which they had to pass into the open field beyond, allowing of a cross-cut into the town, Laura turned her head and looked back to where the embers were still glowing feebly. She stopped. "Look!" she whispered. "Look!" Two men had come into the circle of the light and were standing there peering around. "It is Manning," she whispered again, "Manning and old Kemble." And as if they, too, had been recognized, Manning called Clement's name in a voice of command.

"Come," said Clement, and went through the break in the fence, jerking her after him, bending over and hurrying away in the darkness.

Looking over his shoulder, he saw that Manning was following them, and at a run. If he were alone, he would have a good chance of getting away. He had the start and the advantage, which is always with the pursued over the pursuer. But if he were hampered by a girl dragging on to his hand, he would be overtaken. "You look out for yourself," he bade, shaking

his hand free of hers. "And if he gets you, you tell him it wasn't me you was with."

"Wait for me, Clement, wait for me," she gasped, pleading and breathless. But he was already well away, and paid no heed. The field had been ploughed, and her feet sank in the soft lumpy earth as she tried to run without help. She knew that Manning would be upon her at once.

Then she heard a wailing shriek some distance behind her. It was that of a woman. In spite of all her fright and haste she yet glanced back again. Manning was not coming in her direction at all, but was hurrying in the other, toward the cottage beyond the empty lot. It was on fire. Flames were simmering along the roof, and the woman's voice rose again and again in shrill screams. The girl followed the same impulse which, had she but known it, was followed by the crowd down the road as it too saw the roof on fire, and realized that the sparks from the brush had done the thing. She went on faster than before. The crowd scattered and slunk off instantly, without a thought of going back to lend help. Those who were in it were already frightened enough, for Manning and Kemble had pushed straight amongst them, and must have recognized many.

The house burned as well as had the pyre of brushwood. It was rotten and old and full of cracks for draughts. The fire quivered and danced in yellow

ripples, which the hot wind worried and whipped, breaking them into a foam of sparks that poured away among the tossing poplar trees and beyond, melting among the thick-sown stars.

Those who had burned the effigy had vanished, but others gathered unaccountably — a Cadmus' harvest, apparently. They put their hands to trying to extinguish the fire, and Manning and Kemble took the lead. But there was little chance to establish or maintain discipline, upon the moment's notice, and there seemed, moreover, to be almost nothing with which to fight the flames, only a couple of buckets being produced. The old woman who had come out of the cottage was of no use in offering suggestions. She continued her intermittent wailing, and stood about aimlessly.

The nearest fire-alarm box was a half mile away — the Staunton engine-house three times as far, and there was no hydrant were the engine to come. This much Manning learned, but he sent off to the alarm-box a boy, whose reluctance to leave the scene of excitement caused him to make exceeding poor speed.

Presently the case was seen to be hopeless, the attempt to save the cottage was given up, and Manning and several others carried out so much of the furniture as they might.

The rest stood leaning against the picket-fence, watching. Their faces showed in bright light and black

shadow, changing and shifting. As for the old woman, she had subsided, and stood on the other side of the roadway, wrapped in a white counterpane, surrounded by questioners and sympathizers whom she refused to notice or answer. Her teeth chattered with misery, and she whined monotonously, hugging her body in her arms.

A chemical engine came at last, clanging and rushing up the road, the horses blown with the long run. But there was nothing left to be saved. The flames were licking up almost from the ground, and they threw the white picket-fence and a scorched tree in the yard into wavering relief. The ground in the fields around was still touched with glare, but the light in the sky was fainter. The onlookers began to drop away, and the engines went also, the horses trotting slowly, pounding their big hoofs. The fire lay close among the ashes, and only a stray spark swirled up now and then.

Manning, who guessed but too well, however, how the fire had started, made inquiries. He asked if any one had seen Clement and Laura Halloran. The names were unknown, but a girl recognized the descriptions he gave, and answered. For no reason which he could count sufficient even for himself, a thought had come into his mind as he had caught sight of the two at the edge of the lot. He believed them to be Clement and the Halloran girl, and upon the instant there had flashed upon him the suspicion that those two were

among the spies whose existence the town had been sure of, but unable to discover. Why else should Clement, who was a well-paid workman and who usually fraternized with the committee members — why else should he have been here among a lot of foreigners, and the most worthless part of the American element?

He inquired further as to the owner of the house. He was told that she was a widow, a Mrs. Dorne. By way of further identification, they added that she was the mother-in-law of the laborer Steinberg who had been burned to death in the open-hearth mishap a month or so previously. She had come here to sleep this night, although she had for some time before been staying with her daughter. The two-room cottage had been the whole of her property.

Manning looked at her where she still stood across the street. The hands moved aimlessly and pulled at the bedspread in which she was wrapped, and she moaned through her chattering teeth, as her bleary eyes stared at the ashes and the little flickering flames.

CHAPTER XII

Men conquer not upon such easy terms,
Half serpent, in the struggle, grow these worms.

— *Modern Love.*

THERE having come a final verification of the rumor that new men were to be brought into Staunton, the town was divided into three factions, — those who welcomed the prospect of getting back to work, those who were for resorting to force to prevent the starting up of the mills, and those who were beginning despondently to feel that, if the temple of the master's were to be brought down, they themselves, like the blind though mighty Samson, must be crushed beneath it.

Manning's trust in his own powers to lead the men had weakened in the last few days. The affair of the effigy burning upon the night before had lessened it still further. The majority of those at whose head he had been placed were incapable of discipline, trained by the very nature of their lives, and by the economic conditions which controlled them, to look little farther than the immediate present, to form their existence upon that system which considers only the daily bread, the good or evil of the hour — a system which the whole tenor of the gospel itself contradicts, which,

taken literally, would have defeated the gospel's ends and all the long, upward striving of mankind.

It was a task to give the most confident pause—to deal with this spirit as well as with those of wrath, virulence, jealousy, and craven fear. There were, to be sure, some upon whom he felt able to count. But Kemble, he had begun to misdoubt, was not amongst these. The bubble of his courage had been pricked by sharp mistrust of such happenings as that of the previous night. And he had a large following. He was in a way the Nestor of Staunton. The Achilles who could successfully argue against him had need to be convincing. Should he counsel surrender and abandoning the fight, there were only too many who would go with him. It was to try to prevent this that Manning was now going to his house. The afternoon was already a couple of hours advanced; but as both he and Kemble had spent all of the previous night tracking and bringing to arrest the ringleaders in the crowd which had caused the destruction of Mrs. Dorne's cottage, he had waited until the older man should have been able to get some sleep. He himself had had none and did not feel the need of it. He had been occupied at the committee headquarters until now, and he was too well accustomed to doing with little rest to suffer for want of it as yet.

He was somewhat reluctant to go to Kemble's house; but he had just been told by one of the men that the

heater was at home, and it was necessary to see him before an important and perhaps decisive meeting which was to be held that night. It would have been possible to have sent for him to come to the headquarters room, yet without some good reason for doing so it might well have appeared a high-handed proceeding for a man of three-and-twenty toward one more than twice his age. And there could be no certainty of privacy at the headquarters.

As had happened upon the last time he had come to the house, Mrs. Kemble herself opened the door. When she saw him her hand trembled on the knob. He asked at once for her husband. She hesitated slightly. Then she told him that Kemble was in, and sent him into the little parlor to wait. The window-shades were as usual, so far down as to leave only a half light, but by that he could vaguely discern the large figures of the paper upon the wall, the cheap and gaudy upholstery of the chairs and lounge, the big black-and-gold Japanese screen which had always been his detestation, possibly, as much as anything, because it had cost more than Kemble could afford for a merely useless piece of furniture. Mrs. Kemble was extravagant in a determined, calculated way, which had not even the picturesque excuse of recklessness; and, as a consequence, Kemble had never the money to gratify any wishes of his own. There was also in a glass-covered and carefully locked case the row of twenty-four

encyclopædias which were possessed by all the workmen with pretensions, and which answered in a fashion to the coat of arms of another class—a more hopeful social indication on the whole than reliance upon the merits of “a man dead these five hundred years.”

Mrs. Kemble came down directly, showing traces of hastily given touches to her appearance, and sending forth a heavy odor of some musk perfume.

She had been mistaken, she said nervously. Her husband was not in, after all; but the girl said that he had left word that he would return within five minutes. Manning was not aware that the small maid of all work had been discharged.

Yet he believed Mrs. Kemble to have known perfectly well all the while that her husband was not at home. He left his chair and stood up. “Then I will come back, if you will ask him to wait for me,” he said. But she was standing directly in his way to the door, and showed no intention of letting him pass. There rose in him the rebellion of the male who feels that he is being thwarted, coerced.

“But he is coming back at once,” she repeated doggedly; “why won’t you wait? If it’s because you are afraid of me,” and she laughed shortly, but uneasily, too, “I will go away.”

Manning knew that he turned an angry red and that his face darkened. Instantly she was frightened at having annoyed him, and changed from taunting

to pleading, and yet with the note of complacency of one who believes herself to be loved as a matter of course; for if this were the first time that she herself had been subjugated, it was not, by a number, the first time she had had others under the influence of her impassive, unresponsive beauty.

"What have I done?" she asked, with a break in the low, hard voice. "You never come here now. You never speak to me if you can help it. What have I done? What is the use of making us both miserable — Neil?"

He saw there the construction she had all along been putting on his attitude, recognized her perfect egotism. He tried to tell her, as he had done before, that he had been too much occupied to go anywhere. He would have been glad to put his hand upon her shoulders and set her roughly aside. She seemed to give him the desire to use physical violence. She had always the effect of calling up everything that was rough in him, which much in his surroundings had been calculated to develop, and which it had been the effort of his youth and manhood to overcome. All that was worst in his nature she evoked. He knew that she was a woman who was dangerous to him, who — if once she should succeed in getting a hold upon him — would ruin him in every way, would stop at nothing to do it. His intense dislike of her would grow to hatred soon enough, and

carry them both to any length, to any degree of degradation. As she stood there before him, indistinct in outline, except for the white face and the dull red bands of hair, he felt that he hated her already, for already she was exerting an influence upon him.

"I could help you, if you would let me," she was begging, her voice more insidious than he had known it could be. "I could tell you things about *him*," the pronoun by which she designated the husband a score of years her senior, was one of detestation and contempt. "I could tell you that he wants to go back to work. He says that circumstances are too strong for us. He says that the fancy prices they are going to give for skilled men to train the scabs will bring plenty—and that then you will all be out of your jobs for good."

He was still standing rigidly where he was, forcing himself to resist the influence she was using all the evil knowledge she had acquired to exert upon him. He showed no sign of giving up his intention to go as soon as he should be able to pass.

She moved a little nearer. "But you can't do anything with him," she said softly, "not even you. If you will let me, if you will just say you want me to, Neil, I will help you. He will do anything for me." The scent of the heavy perfume, sickening sweet, was oppressive in the close dusk of the room. He was

looking straight and steadily into the uneasy eyes, which, like the needle in the shaken compass, vacillated but came back irresistibly to the magnet point. He saw that she turned to a livid and mottled pallor which made her face stare even more strangely from the gloom. Before he could realize it her hand went out and shut upon his arm with a force he would not have believed possible, even in her fine, large-modelled arms. She had brought herself close to him. "I will do anything —" it was almost too thick and inarticulate to be heard — "anything for *you*."

And as if her own words had broken the last restraint, she gave a choking cry, caught at his hand with both of her coarse, blunt-fingered ones, and dropping down into the chair he had left, she pressed her cheek and lips against his palm. He could feel her breath hot upon the inner side of his wrist. The sense of her mere beauty, of her crass personality, was a bursting flame before his eyes, blinding him, making his will stagger back stunned and useless. Then the fighting impulse for safety came.

He did not hear the front door shut behind him nor his own feet crossing the boards of the porch. The sharp click of the gate latch was indistinct. He still saw in front of him the figure in the chair, relaxed at the withdrawal of his touch, inert, defeated, her face dropped upon her own out-thrown arm, in utter aban-

donment, the fallen head with its mass of rust-red hair on which the gray light from beneath the lowered shades fell full.

Gradually he realized that he must have left her there without compassion, and have gone from the house. He had turned back upon itself not only a dangerous passion, but a dangerous vanity as well. It remained to be shown what she would make for him the consequences. But though he counted upon her vanity, it was, had he but known it, upon a less one than was really hers, and in which, for the present, his safety from the revenge of a scorned woman lay.

There is only one man who is loved more recklessly, more entirely, than he who returns the love and succumbs. It is he who returns it and resists.

And Mrs. Kemble, as she lay with her head bowed upon her arm, alone in the darkened room, and heard the clicking latch of the gate, believed that this one who had thrown off her hold and left her, had been able to resist.

CHAPTER XIII

A manera que, subiendo los peldaños de sus ambiciosos sueños, que de abajo solo le ofrecen esplendores, descubre de pronto tristes perspectivas.

So that, climbing the heights of one's ambitious dreams, which from below showed only splendors, one soon discovers dreary outlooks.

It was a dark night yet, the darkness just before dawn, when the world's black silence is moving with only the wretched, and the evil, and those in pain, when the toiler wakes to go on with the rolling of his Ixion wheel, and the broken-hearted to stare back into the hollow shadow.

But in Manning's room there was a very glare of light. The round flame of his lamp was at the highest notch, throbbing with its own heat. Manning sat by the desk, all piled with papers and heavy books. He was bent forward, with one arm thrown over his crossed knees, the other out upon the table. Every sinew of his body was strained in unrest. His hands were shut tightly and his jaws thrust forward by the clenching of his teeth. His brows met in a straight black line. He had sat there since he had come in from the stormy

committee meeting, well after one o'clock. He was too disturbed and angry for sleep. It was so long now, indeed, since he had slept, that it seemed to him he could never do so again, so intensely awake he was. His brain was unnaturally clear, his head curiously light, all his senses keen, and his body so numb that he had almost ceased to feel it.

All his life he had been accustomed to doing with little sleep. He had purposely trained himself to it that he might have the time for reading, study, and the open air, which the twelve hours of toil would else have made impossible. But it was now the second night since he had closed his eyes. Affairs in Staunton were reaching their crisis, and every hour had its matters that needed his attention. He had given it; but now that immediate work was not necessary, he was beginning to feel that the nerves of his head burned, and there was a high ringing in his ears. Sometimes he moved slightly, changing his position. Then he was still again. He had been over, more than once, the happenings of the afternoon and evening, the outlook for the immediate future and the more remote.

From the short but emotion-charged scene at the end of which he had left Mrs. Kemble crouching in the chair with her head dropped on her arm, he had gone to find her husband. He had found him and had put his arguments. It had been like raining blows upon a pillow. To give one in one place merely

brought it out in some other, and no impression was permanent.

Kemble was willing to admit that union was a good thing, even an obligation. Nevertheless, it was of no use to attempt it here at Staunton. The company was too determined, too powerful. The public in general was too adverse. The time was not ripe. The country was not yet educated up to what unions might be made under the right sort of leaders. How the education was to come about, how they were to be made anything without the usual troublous formative period of all social growth, he could not say. "I suppose," he had suggested, "that you think I'm one of them that believes nobody oughtn't to declare for a cause till it's got to be strong and triumphant? But we'd better wait. The time ain't come yet. Circumstances —" he repeated what he had said to his wife — "circumstances is too strong for us." Manning, he averred, was young and full of faith. "But I've got past all that. It ain't worth while. The fight's too hard."

And besides, after all, now that he looked back upon it, the company had treated them pretty well. It looked after its injured. It had lent him money to build his house. It had done so with a great many of the men, and rarely foreclosed a mortgage. Tennant gave a good deal personally to charities. And quite apart from charities, the wages had always been fair.

To be sure, the twelve-hour shifts were a hardship. But then the tonnage men, being paid by the quantity, benefited just so much. "Perhaps we don't get time to live. Perhaps we ain't so much account as the machinery that has *got* to be kept in good shape. But the ones of us that has children—" there was an undertone of regret that his wife had not given him these—"they can educate them pretty well."

"To grow up in their turn to a twelve-hour day?" had put in Manning. "Then why educate them? Perhaps you think the employers will offer shorter hours themselves? But they won't. As far as most of them are concerned, we could go back to the fifteen-hour workday of the first part of the century before there were unions that dared to protest. Employers, like Gengembre in France, who do the fighting for legal shorter hours themselves, don't happen often. From the beginning every cut down in working time has met with the bitterest and angriest opposition—with violent protests that business would be ruined."

And it had been without avail to argue that it was the unions that had been in the front rank through a long day of struggle, which were to thank for the rate of wages that moral pressure obliged such as Tennant to pay.

Kemble was not so sure. He advanced a theory that the company might spontaneously have made the wages good and sufficient. Speculation being impos-

sible to refute, and the general contrary indication of industrial history being without effect to convince Kemble, Manning had abandoned the effort, coming to the conclusion that the declared and determined non-union man was to be preferred to the weak-purposed individual of Kemble's stamp.

Not two hours thereafter Kemble had come to the meeting, looking troubled and harassed, and had declared his intention of standing by the committee. Manning had understood at once that Mrs. Kemble must have accomplished that which all his own persuasion had failed to. He wondered why she had done it, and was not comfortable in his own mind as regarded her underlying purpose. But he had gained the thing he most wanted, whatever the cause. Yet Kemble's declaration of his intentions had not had the steadying effect upon the committee which Manning had expected. It had suddenly proved to be Lockhart's followers who were in the ascendant. The papers had that morning quoted Tennant to the effect that "hunger should bring capitulation," that organized labor was a revolutionary, murderous mob of brutal and ignorant men, who wished to run an employer's private business for him, and that the company would crush unionism at whatever cost.

The Staunton men resented it—even many who were of non-union persuasion, but felt the attack upon representative members of their own class, uttered in

exactly the same vindictive spirit of exasperation as that which actuates the throwing of cobblestones and brickbats. For the temper of the age it savored too much the answer of Pharaoh, the master, to Moses and Aaron. And it brought forth in some quarters the retort that if the company tried to start up the mills with non-union men, the mills would be wrecked.

That was now the popular sentiment even among the majority of the committee. The man who should advocate it would be the popular leader. He who should stand against it would be overridden. And Manning knew it—had seen it to-night. It was that which he had been considering as he sat alone in his room. He had had his temptation—had looked it full in the face. He did not wish to be deposed almost at the outset—to submit to the humiliation of being beaten by Lockhart. He did not care to be considered as a man who had lost his grip on the first situation he had ever tried to handle. If he were now to go back on his convictions and advise fight—even only tacitly consent to it—he could easily keep the command. In the long run it would, he saw plainly, be neither to his own interests nor to that of the cause. But any way he might act, the future seemed to hold nothing for him in this line. He was worsted before he had fairly begun.

Yet—he drew a long, hard breath at last, and his muscles relaxed—if it depended upon his permitting violence, then Lockhart would have to win.

He stood up, went over to the window, and lifted a corner of the shade. It was night still, and there was not the echo of a sound. He returned to his chair by the desk, but almost at once a pebble rattled against his window-pane.

He turned the lamp very low. There was always the chance that an attempt would be made upon his life by some fanatic who believed him—as some already did—to be in Tennant's pay to preserve peace.

He was not minded to make himself more of a mark for a bullet than was necessary, and he would have been a good one with the light and the white wall back of him. He went to the window again. His sight had not accustomed itself to the change from glare to darkness, and he could distinguish nothing down in the street, but it seemed to him that his name was spoken from out the void. He answered with a brief and tentative "Yes?"

Something more was said. He could not hear it. He considered what he should do. If whoever was below wished to see him, it might perhaps be upon some matter urgently important, in order to give him information which he might need. He leaned from the window and spoke distinctly. "Wait for me," he said. He pulled down the curtain, went back to the desk, and raised the lamp-flame. Then he opened the drawer, took out a revolver, the nickel of which glinted in the bright light, and leaving the room went down the creaking stairs to open the front door.

The man came in. A gas-jet was turned low and let Manning see him and recognize him as a Greek who had formerly been a laborer in his own department. Still considering the possibility of attack, he sent him ahead up the stairway. When they reached the room the Greek stood blinking and dazzled. He appeared the very genius of want—an Erisichthon of whose bowels Famine had taken possession. He might well have been painful to look at, but Manning looked at him with sufficient composure, and speculated as to what it could be that he wanted. He was not especially sorry for him. He knew him to be in receipt of benefits from the union, and remembered, moreover, that he was given to drinking. He motioned to a chair. The man walked to it with the careful precision in placing his feet of some one under the influence of liquor. Yet Manning believed that he was sober, and guessed it to be the light-headedness of hunger. The Greek, having taken the chair, spoke at once.

"I think I will go back to work," he said. Foreign birth was betrayed in only the most intangible and elusive of accents.

Manning nodded. It was not merely to tell him this that the man was sneaking about in the black hours.

"I think I will go back when the blacklegs they come."

Manning nodded again. He knew to the full the purposes which silence could be made to serve.

"If I go now — then I can get work. By and by I cannot. It is better I go now. My family is twelve." He grinned unhappily.

Manning studied him with a detached interest he could not make sympathetic. Twelve of them! Twelve of this breed spawned upon a country which was struggling to maintain Anglo-Saxon ideals, which was making the world's great attempt at a form of government demanding the highest and most advanced class of citizenship. It was an argument for Malthus, certainly.

The man had on a coat which had been black but was now almost yellow. Beneath it was a threadbare undershirt full of holes. Manning waited yet. The Greek began to chew the long ends of his mustache.

"Do you hear what happen in the strike in the Chicago stove factory?" he asked ingratiatingly.

"No," said Manning.

"No? Well, I work there. I know. Well — there was some dynamite sticks in the moulds where some scabs they worked. The shop it was blowed up."

"And you helped put the sticks there?" said Manning, not as an accusation but as a matter of fact.

"No," answered the man, "no; I think it was the Pinkertons done it."

Manning had very slight faith in the theory that detectives made a practice of such methods in order to throw unjust suspicion and odium upon the strikers.

"I see," he said, but gave no sign that he also saw what was coming. His fingers drummed upon the table, and he kept his eyes on the man.

"Yes," ventured the latter, seeking a lead and encouragement.

"Yes," reiterated Manning, then suddenly deciding to play openly. "Well, some sticks of dynamite won't blow up these shops. They are too big and there are too many of them."

The Greek smiled again. "Some gas that would be turned on in the open-hearth furnace would make some trouble, maybe, to begin," he suggested.

"It would — for you," assented Manning, tranquilly. "Because if there is any gas turned on in the furnaces, or any dynamite exploded, I will feel called upon to mention the matter to the police at once. Besides, you might get blown up yourself. And even if you didn't, you would certainly get into jail."

The man sprang at him with the quick agility of the feline, and a drawn knife was in his hands, by a movement so swift as to have been invisible. Manning's arm went out and pushed him half across the room, but the knife grazed his finger and cut it slightly.

"Sit down," he commanded without further disturbing himself. "Don't play any of that. I could snap your back without trying to." He had put the revolver on the desk when the man had not seen him, and had pushed some papers over it. He did not think it worth

while to show it now. "You are half starved, and whiskey has played the devil with your nerves," he said. He had taken out his handkerchief and was wrapping it around the bleeding finger.

The man still threatened. "You tell the police —"

"I won't," answered Manning; "not unless something that I think you are behind happens at the mills. Then I will."

The man went unwillingly back to the chair, sitting upon the edge of it.

"And now," — Manning took another tone, — "if you have nothing further to see me about —"

The Greek examined the tip of a boot from which five grimy toes were showing. "I think you would want me to help you," he said sulkily.

"I know you did," answered Manning, choosing his words, for though he was not greatly inclined to think so, it was altogether within the possibilities that the man might be a spy of the company, sent to get evidence against him. "I know you did. But you made a mistake. I am looking after the interests of a few thousand respectable men, not bossing a gang of criminals. So I don't need your services. Is that all you wanted to see me about?" he repeated.

The man got up to his feet. "I guess so," he said. He glanced sidewise sharply. "You won't tell the police?" he demanded again.

"No," said Manning.

"You will not tell that I come here?" The little, mean eyes watched him eagerly.

"So that if you should happen to want to finish me up some dark night, no one would be able to connect it with you?" was Manning's spoken interpretation of the meaning behind the question. "On the contrary, I will tell two or three people that you have been here."

The man looked savage. "What for will you say I come?" he insisted.

Manning's patience was giving out. "Now look here," he said; "I will do nothing to hurt you unless I think you have done something to hurt some one else. And I will not promise more than that."

The man showed one eye-tooth in an unpleasant laugh. Then he got to the door and opened it. "Good-by," he said over his shoulder and in a whisper.

"Good-by," answered Manning. The steps creaked for a minute or two. The front door was opened and shut.

Manning put out the lamps. Then he crossed to the windows and pulled up the curtains.

It was gray daybreak.

CHAPTER XIV

Thou shalt abstain, renounce, refrain.
Such is the everlasting song
That in the ears of all men rings,
That unrelieved, our whole life long,
Each hour, in passing, hoarsely brings.

— GOETHE.

ON the evening of the ball, Durran, having gone to Staunton and learned that the fire was merely an outlying cottage which had in some manner caught, had returned to the Tennants' house. He had returned also, apparently, to a more impersonal frame of mind with regard to Beatrice and Valerio, and had tacitly asked pardon for his interference.

As a consequence, two mornings later, when Beatrice wished to go over to Staunton, she sent him a note asking his services as escort should he himself be going across the river, as she supposed it probable. When he had responded by reporting in person, and she found him waiting for her in the library, she explained. Lester would, as she happened to know, very especially wish to have her help that day. Mrs. Steinberg and the baby had to be provided for in some new way, since the former did not recover, and the latter was not doing

so well as at first. Moreover, the loss of the cottage had so nearly unhinged old Mrs. Dorne's mind as to render her useless to take care of any one. Besides which one matter, there were others equally pressing. But her father, Beatrice went on, not liking the present temper of the workmen, had that morning said that she was not to go into Staunton unless she were accompanied by some one able to take care of her if need should arise. "If you will leave me at the parish house," she finished, drawing on her gloves, "Mr. Lester will bring me back as far as this side of the river, I dare say."

Durran consented with a willingness through which he did not allow it to appear that he was not entirely satisfied with the footing of a friend who was to be used at my lady's good pleasure and thanked with nothing warmer than liking and confidence.

"We will not drive, though?" he suggested. "It is wiser not," he assented, when she had told him that she never did so. "I saw the association paper yesterday, wherein some illiterate and unbalanced contributor raved of France and 1792, and of the children of the poor ground to death nowadays under the carriage wheels of the rich. A carriage might be unpopular."

On the ride to Staunton, he spoke of the conditions there. They did not please him. "We are losing more than fifty thousand dollars a day," he said, "and when the unskilled men get to scorching heats and

spilling and spoiling, we won't be much better off for some time. Besides which, there is going to be trouble when we start up, beyond the shadow of a doubt. The sheriff went over there yesterday, at our instigation, to warn the men to keep the peace. They told him point-blank that the mills were not going to be run non-union if they could prevent it. He is a timid soul and he got uncomfortable and came back forthwith. Afterwards, though, Manning — who wasn't around at the time — heard of it, and sent him word that the committee would make every effort for law and order."

"It is not a revolt, sire — it is a revolution," quoted Beatrice.

"Something like it," agreed Durran. "And we are meeting it, as a nation, about as intelligently as did the monarch and nobles who treated that warning with bad-tempered disdain." He had in his pocket at that moment an anonymous notice that Alan Tennant's life would be attempted and the attempt would not be abandoned until it should succeed. He had showed it to Tennant himself — who had paid no attention to the threat. His worst enemy could never have charged him with cowardice. "This 'The State is Myself' attitude," he came out presently, "won't do. It can't be made to work, whether by the capital side or the labor one. There ought to be some method of conciliation that would do away with it and strike a happy medium. I believe there are ways, even now, of managing without this

everlasting tug and friction—at any rate in dealing with the better class of workmen. And it lies with us to make the advances, too, for the reason that we have the best of things.”

He stopped and was looking out of the window. They were on the city side, just running upon the bridge which crossed the river to Staunton. A man was limping along the footpath with a twisting motion which threw him sidewise at every step and seemed painfully wearisome. He was a big, raw-boned Irishman with a good-humored, patient face, all drawn and woebegone now. His troubled blue eyes met Durran's without seeming to see him.

“The best of things!” repeated Durran, “Haven't we though! Look at that. This”—he glanced himself over—“is what it means to me to have the plant shut for a few weeks. That is what it means to him. It is appalling the odds against them in the fight, whenever they make it. He is going to the city, I suppose, to hunt a job—like hundreds of the other poor devils—and walking it with that lame leg!”

“It is Farraday,” said Beatrice. She told him his story. “He has tramped the streets for weeks, looking, begging, for anything to do, and not finding it.”

“Well,” Durran drew some consolation, “he can get it to-morrow—if he has the courage to go into the mills.”

As the car stopped in front of the church, Beatrice saw some one going into the door of the parish house. It was Manning. She had not met him since the day when he had warned her against coming to Staunton, and she was so little willing to be thrown with him now that she would have turned away if she had had any excuse for doing so. It was hardly possible, though, to say to Durran that this workingman, her father's determined opponent and particular aversion, loved her,—that she was something very like afraid to meet him face to face. She was not able to give, even to herself, any reason for that half fear. She had often enough encountered undisturbed other men who had loved her, or professed to it. Nor could she justify the reluctance to come upon Manning by any doubt as to the respect with which he would treat her under all and any conditions. She had now what amounted to a conviction that his love was no new and sudden thing, but one of long duration, deep-rooted in his nature and in the past. It had never yet caused him to venture even near to the bounds of familiarity, had indeed made him take refuge in an aloofness which heretofore she had not been able to explain. And, moreover, Lester would be in his office—since it was his office hour—and the presence of a third person would make the situation less difficult. If by any chance he were temporarily absent, then she would keep Durran.

But Lester was not in the office. Manning, who had sat down to make the attempt to read the morning's paper while he waited, rose at their entrance. Lester, he said, had left a note upon the desk, to the effect that he had been called away but would return in half an hour. He motioned to the note, which, scribbled large in blue pencil, still lay on the blotter. Durran's brow contracted. He did not have half an hour to spare. He had promised to meet some one in his office at the mills. There was a perceptible pause, one in which was to be felt hesitation. Manning said nothing. Durran turned to him. Was it his intention to wait for Lester? It had been, Manning answered, without looking at Beatrice. Durran was clearly relieved from a predicament. With Manning, Beatrice would, if anything, be safer than with himself.

"I will leave Miss Tennant in your charge then," he said, without doubt of the arrangement being as satisfactory to every one as to himself. Manning bowed his head in acquiescence.

Should he come back for her? Durran asked. Beatrice told him that it would hardly be necessary. Mr. Lester would take her across the river. "As far as that is concerned," she added, smiling, "I am not, you know, of the opinion that there is the least need for keeping me under guard."

She went over to a chair near the window. It was at one end of a short deal table. The one in which

Manning had been sitting was at the other. He returned to it. Had she seen the morning paper? he asked, taking it up to pass it across to her. A quite innocent untruth would have made it possible for her to avail herself of the opportunity which — rather than the news sheet — he was offering her. She regretted instantly as she answered that she had, and so deprived herself of the refuge she could have taken behind the expanse of paper. She knew that he would not now read it himself and leave her sitting there. He had given her the chance to ignore his presence, but he would not resort to ignoring hers.

Manning laid the paper down and touched the middle column with his forefinger, — the one, as it happened, which the Greek's knife had cut and which was now bound with a strip of cloth. "Then you saw what they are saying of me?" he said.

"That you were at the burning of the effigy?" she asked.

"Yes," he answered.

"I saw it," she told him; "but I did not believe it, of course."

He did not put his gratitude into words, but she saw it on his face, — the dark face which seemed in the past weeks to have lost youth and gained in sternness and strength. Then she looked at his hand. He had hurt himself? she questioned.

He smiled as if in recollection of some small, in-

effectual exhibition of spite toward himself. "A man came into my room last night on a little matter of what he thought might be business. And because I didn't agree with him, he tried to knife me. But he was weak from want of food and from too much whiskey, and he was a little terrier of a Greek anyway. So this was all it came to." He dismissed it by reverting to the former subject. "It was true in a way, however, that I was on the scene of the burning of the effigy," he said, and went on to tell her that he had arrived too late for anything but to see the cottage burst out into flames. He gave her the story of this latter, and of the effect it had had upon Mrs. Dorne, sparing her, though, the recital of the old creature's subsequent ravings against Tennant and the masters in general, to whose account her distorted brain managed to lay this final misfortune. Beatrice, however, whom Lester had already told about it, appreciated the reticence.

There was something further which Lester had also told her, the destitution of the Farraday children and the care Manning was taking of them. It was Farraday himself from whom Lester had heard the story. Beatrice thought of it as she listened to him. And it was not the old woman, wrapped in the white counterpane and wailing about her flaming cottage, that she saw, but the four gaunt little unfortunates, who, in their need, had gone to the big cousin and had not found their confidence misplaced. She knew that the

tears were coming into her eyes, as they did easily when her sympathies were touched, and she lowered her lids quickly. But it was too late.

Manning's words stopped. The sentence and the story went unfinished. He sat looking at her. The eyes were still downcast and the long lashes were wet. Her gloved hand lay on the table within his reach. His fingers shut around the newspaper which he had folded and rolled as he had talked. The nerves in his head were humming like stretched wires in the wind, with the tenseness of want of sleep. Things looked too far away to his sight. There was an unreality about everything he felt and heard. He knew that the strain of sleeplessness and responsibility, the strain of the years of self-repression in Beatrice's presence and in his thoughts of her, had reached the utmost point to be endured without the giving way of his will. It had been already overmuch that she had, all unexpected, come in upon him here while his mind had been full of her, dwelling upon things in the past with an unusual vividness of recollection. He saw that her lids were quivering. He knew that she would look up, and he tried to force himself under control. She raised her eyes, and they met his. When they fell again, there was no further use of pretence upon either part. He sat where he was for a moment longer. Then he put down the paper and stood up, going across the room and coming back, without purpose but in the

necessity for movement. He came to a stop by her chair.

"I am sorry I have failed," he said ; "after succeeding for five years, as I think I did, I am sorry to have let you know the truth now. And after to-day, too, I might never have seen you again."

Beatrice did not answer ; she took up a pencil which was on the table near her, but her hand shook so much that she had to put it down again.

"After to-morrow, when the mills start up with the new men, I will probably have to go away," he went on. "We are beaten beforehand, I am afraid, whether the fight can be prevented or not." He caught himself up and left that which it might be possible for her to feel in the nature of a reproach. "I have honestly tried to spare you anything of this kind," he said, still standing at a little distance from her and looking at a framed photograph of a Del Sarto Madonna,—a Sunday school present to the rector. "I would not have been here myself this morning unless I had believed that you surely wouldn't be coming over to Staunton when things are as unsettled as they are now." He wondered if he were being intelligible and coherent. His voice seemed to him that of some one else. He told himself with disgust that it was a poor sort of strength that had not been able to stand firm against the mere physical need of sleep and the softened expression of a woman's eyes.

He went back to the chair and sat in it so that he faced her.

There was something in his unnatural look of stress which made her take in her breath sharply between her teeth. The force that showed in spite of him dismayed her. It was not the kind of mild emotion she had seen in other men who had said that they cared for her.

"It may make you a little unhappy for a while," he took it up, "but it can hardly trouble you very long to know that I love you,—that I have for a long time, and always shall. Perhaps, after all, it is just as well for you to know it. It can't harm any woman to be loved—in the way I do you. I have tried to make work and the other things crowd you out, but it didn't succeed. And no other affection will ever do it. Whatever I get out of life—and I begin to think it won't be much—I will have to do without any woman's affection. There can never be one after you."

She made a futile gesture to stop him, but she found no words that could mean anything to him or to her. His hand was lying on the table now, as hers had been a few minutes before,—a large, well-made hand, squared, hardened, and marked with work, darker than ever in contrast with the strip of white bandage. She reached out in an impulse of pity and laid her fingers upon it. His teeth shut as he made himself endure the touch without sign or response. She drew back

quickly, as if realizing the very mistaken kindness of the impulse. He seemed for a short space to have nothing more to say. He was looking at the hand she had withdrawn.

"To-morrow, —" he came to it abruptly, — "to-morrow, if they bring in the new men, there may be a fight. If there is, I will be in the midst of it probably. Whatever happens — however I come out — I hope you will still believe in me. You must believe that I was there to try and stop the trouble, not to help it on. And if you ever should hear of me in the future, I would like to have you think that I have done as nearly the right thing as I could. All you can ever give me is confidence, and I promise you to deserve it."

She answered that it would be, in time to come, as it had been in the past, impossible for her to do other than trust him.

He rose to his feet once more, and going as far away as the room would permit, fell to walking back and forth in measured steps, a measured distance. Never before had he spoken at such length in her hearing, and she saw that, having finished what he had to say, he would relapse into the silence which he had made it his habit to maintain in her presence.

Outside, two women in the street were calling harshly to one another. She could not hear what they said. She put up her hands aimlessly and smoothed her hair. Manning did not see the little purposeless, nervous

movement. He kept on pacing slowly up and down. He could not go away and leave her, as he had promised Durran to stay until Lester should come. But at least he could make it better for her by going out into the hall. He had left his hat on the table, and he crossed back to get it. He took it up and stood near her.

“I will wait outside until Mr. Lester comes,” he told her. “And — if I should never see you again —” for an instant and for the first time he was not quite master of his voice, then he made an effort and went on — “if I never see you again after to-day, you will be none the worse for my having loved you — and I will always be much the better.”

When the door had shut after him she too sat looking at the Madonna. She read the lettering beneath it without knowing that she did so, without its conveying any meaning to her. The only feeling of which she seemed to be conscious was a dull regret, a sense of the futility, the uselessness of it, that this should have been Manning’s portion in life.

Out in the hall his footsteps passed and repassed the door at regular intervals.

At last she heard other steps approaching, heard Lester’s greeting, and some undistinguishable answer in Manning’s deep, carrying tones. The two talked for a few minutes. Then there were again steps on

the walk outside — this time going away from the building. The door opened and Lester came in. Beatrice had, it seemed, been reading the church calendar. She was standing by the fireplace where it hung.

“Manning told me that you were here,” he said, and added his regret that she had been obliged to wait. “I have sent Manning back to his room to get some sleep,” he reverted. “It is more than forty-eight hours, he tells me, since he has had any. He has no business to trade on a magnificent constitution and iron nerves like that. The nerves are at the snapping point already, and he looks completely done.” He seemed to be thinking of something, and stood by the desk looking down at the note he himself had left. He picked it up, crumpled it, and threw it into the waste-basket. Then he raised his head. “I wrote you, you remember, that he had been taking care of those Farraday children. Well — he came to ask *me* to keep on with it, in the event of any mishap to himself to-morrow. He gave me some money for them.” He looked over the papers in the desk, found a letter for which he was apparently searching, and put it into his pocket. “Whatever the results of to-morrow are,” he said, “Manning will undoubtedly be lost to Staunton for good and all. And there are others besides myself who will realize the loss.”

CHAPTER XV

Parceque l'homme dans les grandes crises retourne bien vite à ses instincts d'origine, qui sont ceux d'une bête méchante.—*Vue Générale de l'Histoire Politique de l'Europe.*

Because man in great crises returns quickly to his original instincts, which are those of a fierce beast.—*General View of the Political History of Europe.*

THE scream of a steam whistle, shrill and strident, cut through the gray, rain-streaked dawn. A whistle across the river took it up, far off and faint. A smaller, higher-pitched one near by joined in. The air was full of the keen shrieks. And they told the Staunton workmen—by prearranged signal—that others were coming to start the mills, and that the way was up the river by boat.

The pickets, who for some days past had been stationed along the banks, had given warning of the approach of what was, to the greater part of the steel workers, the dreaded and detested enemy, though to a fair-sized minority the deliverers from compulsion and idleness.

As the first whistle began to blow, Manning went to his window and looked out. He had gone from Lester on the previous morning with a dull sense

that the crisis of his life had been and passed, and had left him, thenceforth, empty-handed. There had been no more committee work for him to do, the tension of his mind and body had seemed relaxed, and he had thrown himself upon his iron bed and slept, heavily, deadly, until within an hour before the sounding of the signals. Now he was fully dressed and ready. He went out of the room, down the stairs, and into the street. At the first whistle there had not been a light in the town save perhaps that of his own lamp. Now there was one in almost every window. Distorted shadows were passing back and forth across the curtains. There were already a good many men about. And he saw with foreboding that his personal exertions had not prevented the saloons from opening or from being patronized. He looked up at the Farraday window as he passed. There was a faint light there also. He knew that Farraday had left town the day before, as many of the non-union men had been doing recently. And he believed that he, like the rest, had gone up the river a distance to join the new men who were being brought, and so put themselves the more immediately under the company's protection. It must be Nettie, then, who was stirring in the room. He hoped that she and the children would not come out into the streets, but he feared that they would. Nettie had, as had before

been manifested, the love of a fight for its own sake, which came to her fairly in that strain of her blood which was Hibernian.

And had he but known it, she was even now roused to a pitch of expectation, and had worked the two little boys up in the same degree. She had found a couple of inches of dusty candle, and had stuck it with its own grease on the edge of the cold stove. By its light she was dressing the baby. She herself and the boys had no need of any such ceremony. They slept and waked in the garments they had on. But Nettie had upon her own account devised a nightgown for the baby, making it from some purple cotton with large yellow and green pansies which had been given her once by a neighbor. Its fashioning was of the simplest—a long, straight piece with a slit for the head to go through. And it was tied under the arms by a torn strip of the same. It was a possession which put the baby upon a higher plane than the rest.

While the little boys watched with impatience the superfluous process of dressing their infant sister, the older one encouraged them with forecasts of the fight to be.

“An A No. 1 scrap,” she keyed up their expectations,—“with stones an’ knives an’ maybe guns.”

They wriggled, half delighted, half scared, and the small three-year-old lisped after the big sister who controlled their destinies, “Sthones an’ knifes an’ duns.”

When the baby was ready and hoisted to Nettie's shoulder they went out, the four of them, scuttling along in the drizzling, but lessening, rain.

Manning found them on the outskirts of the crowd, which was fast gathering by the white fence. He asked Nettie what she intended to do. Nettie shifted the baby's weight and looked up. The other three were, as usual, staring him out of countenance with solemn interest and awe. Nettie expressed her intention of seeing any fight that might happen. He told her that there might not be any to see, and that the best thing she could do would be to take herself and the children home again.

"What for," said Nettie, "if there ain't going to be no scrap?" She was not to be deceived by shallow reasonings.

"There may be," he answered.

"Then I'm going to see it," she repeated.

To his command that she go back she returned a flat refusal. She remembered that he had been good to her, but there were certain bounds beyond which gratitude could not be expected to go. When he put a heavy hand upon her shoulder, by way of compulsion, she slipped from under it, and setting the baby upon its legs—the which bowed and unsteady props at once gave way—she faced her tall cousin with her fists on her hips. It was a shrill stand for her freedom of action that she made, and he knew that unless he

were to pick her up and carry her, she could never be got away. He had no time for that, and he would hardly have enjoyed the wild-cat struggle she would have made.

"You will be hurt," he said, more than a little angry.

She stuck out her sharp chin in disdain of bodily wounds.

"The baby may be killed." He appealed to the nearest approach to softness he had found in her nature. But even that was in vain.

"No, she won't," said Nettie, once more taking up that burden of her unyouthful childhood. She departed into the thick of the crowd, and the two boys trotted trustingly after her. Manning had to let them go.

There was a movement in the crowd. It began to surge and jostle in one direction. He turned in that direction himself. Through the gray of the rain he could see a man standing in a big, empty dray. He could not discern who it was, but the sound of an haranguing voice reached him, and it was not a good occasion for any chance oratory. He put his superior strength to use and pushed his way through to the wagon. Then he saw that it was Lockhart, who was taking this opportunity to make the public speech which the wiser of the committeemen had, up to now, been able to keep him from. He was well into it

already, and he was being listened to. He was doing the very thing which, to Manning, it seemed most desirable to avoid, — dwelling upon wrongs, real and invented, and lashing those who were only too ready to plunge under even the firmest rein and gentlest handling. Would they, he asked, stand meekly by and let a set of many times cursed black sheep come in and take their homes and their work and the bread out of their mouths? There was too much truth in what he argued as to the homes representing all the toil and hard savings of years for it not to carry deep into some sore-tried and desperate hearts — though it was, upon the whole, those who had no homes and had made no exertion to obtain them who were the most inflammable.

“You let them scabs get into there once and start up the mills, and before you know it more will come — enough for the company to run full with. Then you’ll be out of your jobs here — and blacklisted in every other concern in this free country.” He denounced the employers and railed at their consistency. “They are in a hurry to say that every man has got a right to work if he wants to, whether he belongs to a union or not. That’s when they want to use scabs who ain’t men enough to stand for their rights. But they don’t think so when they send out a black-list — and the courts you pay taxes to keep says they are right — that the black-list is legal, but picketing and the boycott’s all wrong.”

The listeners were being played upon dangerously. Enthusiasm is so largely a matter of friction that what may leave one little moved will work a thousand to frenzy. Lockhart might have gone on indefinitely until the boats should have come into sight upon the mist-shrouded river; but Manning was beside him in the wagon.

"You have got to stop this, Lockhart," he said. It was measured, and lost no determination through being quiet.

Lockhart was not quiet. He shouted his rage and refusal for all the crowd to hear. "You've run the town too long and done nobody any good," he defied. Then he turned to the rest. "Shall I tell you all what he's been doing?" He was shaking his fist in Manning's face the while. "Shall I tell you? He has been in Tennant's pay to keep you still while the blacklegs are brought in."

Without further parley Manning lifted him up by the collar of his coat, and with a warning to those below, dropped him down to the ground. Then he stood erect again and looked out over them. There were thousands already, crushed close in the fine rain. Women jostled and held their places with the men, their shawls and aprons often filled with stones and broken bricks. Manning did not doubt that the men had among them revolvers and knives. It was a formidable mob, in all the savagery of the half-awake early day. The warm, moist

air reeked with the odor of soaked and foul clothing and with liquor fumes, and there occurred to Manning the disgusted thought that a pack of beasts would have been infinitely more admirable, more respect-inspiring, than the possible superiority of man above the animals is only to be measured by his possible debasement below them.

His figure stood out large in the mist of the drizzle. And after a momentary delay and uncertainty the crowd laughed and applauded. They liked him better than Lockhart, and their admiration for sheer, confident strength, their love of comedy, had been touched.

He spoke to them himself, undoing as much as he could the effect the other had produced.

"What Lockhart has said about me," he briefly dismissed the charge against himself, "is not worth my denying. Unless you already believe it to be a lie, nothing I can say will make you."

They cheered again, but a little weakly. It was evident that if the accusation was not credited, at least it had raised suspicion in their minds.

Lockhart was down in the press and trying to get up on the dray again. They found some amusement in keeping him back every time that he set his foot upon the hub to climb in. He swore as he hit them off. A man put a hand over his mouth with an order to "let the other fellow have his say now." Lockhart bit the flesh at the base of the thumb, until his long teeth

met. The man knocked him down and kicked him in the head with his boot.

It was done quickly and with little noise. But Lockhart was stunned. It was the second time that he had been put out of the field with only his own uncontrollable temper to thank. They lifted him into the back of the dray, indifferent as to how he should come out. Manning had noticed nothing of it, and was still speaking.

"But it is worth my while," he had said, "to assure you of what you already know, that any fighting to-day will lose us our last chance. Otherwise there is still the hope that the sympathy of fellow-workmen and of the public may make it impossible for the company to find enough non-union men to run its plants. If there is one thing we had, for our own sakes, better not do, it is to make so much trouble that the sheriff will be useless and the militia necessary." He kept on arguing and talking against time in the same strain, and repeating, once and again, with a realization that to the dull of perception, as to the heathen, repetition is needed and not vain.

He accomplished so much that when a tug, having in tow two barges, came into sight down the river, they took it almost quietly. Even that was better than he had hoped for. Instead of breaking through the fence and beginning demonstrations at once, to prevent a landing, they scattered to the roofs of houses, and to the

river's edge, where the formation of the bank and a curve in the river itself made it possible for them to see around the fence into the yards.

A good many police and uniformed watchmen had been got in during the night. There was some shouting and gesticulating from those on the bank, but that, so far, was all.

Lockhart was not sufficiently recovered to be at trouble-making again. And the dispersion of the crowd toward a new centre of interest made it useless for Manning to attempt further speech. He stood talking with Kemble and several others who belonged to the committee. Kemble was nervous and distressed almost to the point of tears.

They were on the sidewalk directly in front of the Halloran place. Laura Halloran was in her usual place back of the showcase of the cigar counter. Clement was leaning upon the glass, talking with her. Though he knew himself to be under suspicion now, as a consequence of having been seen at the effigy-burning, he had managed so well that it had been possible to prove nothing worse against him than the undue curiosity he had penitently admitted. So he had been allowed to remain in the town.

The girl, as he talked to her now, looked wretched and on the defensive. "He ain't done me no harm, though," she said in an abject and beseeching whisper. "How do I know but what it will kill him?"

"You know because I tell you—that's how," answered Clement, with the accent of the master. "Are you going to do it?"

"But what for?" she put it off still. "He ain't going to make a fight. He's going to stop it if he can, ain't he?"

"He can't stop it," retorted Clement, angry at losing time when time was precious. That which he was engaged in now was not the company's business and behest. He was earning an honest penny from that faction of the committee which hated Manning and all his works. "Don't you try making me give you my reasons for everything, anyway," he threatened. "They're my reasons, and that's all you've got to know.—Are you going to do it?" he repeated the question.

"No!" she said, with too much defiance to be convincing. He knew that she would, that she would do more even than he was asking in order to hold him, to try and make him marry her—the which, being already tired of her, he had no least intention of doing.

But he turned on his heel and made as if to walk away.

"Here—Clement—give it to me," she surrendered unconditionally.

He put his hand over hers as if to clasp it, and left a small vial there. "Don't drop it," he advised

in lordly tones, which implied that to do so would bring his displeasure upon her head.

She touched his shoulder appealingly, in a way which begged forgiveness and approval.

"That's all right," he told her magnanimously, then added a caution that the affair in hand be properly attended to.

His own part was done when he had passed the word to a man who waited not far off—a member of the committee. The latter walked over and joined the group with which Manning stood. Presently he suggested that he was himself going into the Halloran place for a cup of coffee, and asked Manning and Kemble to go with him. Manning, he urged, had already done a good morning's work and might have to be here all day, with no chance to return to his boarding place.

It was obviously good counsel. Manning went to where he could see the tug and barges. They were moving very slowly against the strong current and were still well away from the landing inside the yards. He would, he concluded, have time to take the coffee. He joined the man who had extended the invitation, and went with him and Kemble into Mrs. Halloran's restaurant. The coffee was hot and very strong. They drank it and ate some bread, then went out into the street again.

Manning returned to the river bank, where the

crowd was thickest and momentarily growing. The barges were coming close to the landing, and the men upon them could be plainly seen. It was a sight to arouse those upon the bank. These shouted warnings, appeals, and threats. It was an unintelligible uproar. Some who had already worked in the plant were recognized and pointed out. Among them was Farraday.

Those on the outside of the stockade watched the tug manœuvre the first barge to the side of the wharf.

There was a silence upon the bank—a silence of dread and hate and fear. The thousands of men and women were looking upon the coming of those who were to drive them out into the unknown, uncertain future, where homelessness, starvation, and crime might be their portion; who were to take from them all their associations, friends, and ties, the savings of their lives, the homes which they had been encouraged to come here and build, and from which now—because they had formed certain convictions and wished to live up to them—they were to be turned. It would have needed natures trained to a rare, inhuman height of philosophy, wisdom, and foresight to stand calmly and watch and wait. Yet they might have done little more had it not been for a sudden and unexpected impulse being given them.

A voice broke the silence which had fallen after the first burst of uproar. “My God! my God!” was the

loud wail that went up to the gloomy sky. "They're enough to start up the mills! We're beat! And my house is here—everything I got in the world—everything—*everything!*"

The men were beginning to pour out from the barge upon the landing, and to scramble up the embankment. They themselves were not happy as they looked dubiously over the moving, muttering mass of angry humanity outside the frail stockade. Except for a dozen or two professional strike breakers, they were not doing this thing from choice, but of hard necessity. Theirs was something the plight of those Roman Catholic prisoners whom a Huguenot general forced to the top of their fortress, offering them the choice of dying there or jumping upon the points of spears set up below; of those Britons who sent word to Rome that the barbarians drove them into the sea, and the sea drove them back again upon the barbarians.

Regardless of the barbed wire on the top of the fence, some had raised themselves to look over. Others had clambered upon the shoulders of those near at hand, that they might the better see. Of these was a Pole armed with a large revolver. Whether it were through intent or through mischance, or a tightened grasp as he balanced in his precarious position, the revolver was discharged three times in quick succession. A policeman within the stockade fell. The rest drew their own revolvers and returned the

fire. Two men in the crowd screamed out that they were hit. And the fight was on.

A piece of a slag broke a board from the fence. It gave a hold, and another and another were ripped out. The crowd pressed tumbling through, with women among the leaders.

Manning, too, forced his way through, and made at a run ahead of the rest, for the top of a pile of finished beams. The yards were filling with the heaving, swaying heads and shoulders of a mob which howled and shouted and fired recklessly, and drove back the few policemen with brickbats, stones, and slag.

The sheriff who had come across the river in a launch with his deputies made no attempt at a stand. He was retreating to his boat.

Manning, looking down, felt his sight blurred, his head dizzy, his ears deadened. He tried to call out, but his voice would not come loudly enough to be heard even a few feet away. He jerked at his collar, put both hands to his throat, and tried again. It was without better result. He flung out his arms and from his commanding position motioned them to stop. The dizziness was growing worse. The firing had stopped, but the yells which continued as the new men fell back upon the barges seemed to reach him out of an infinite distance, muffled, indistinct. He stood swaying. Had he been poisoned with the coffee, he wondered dully, or only drugged? If he could keep up here in the air,

above the crowd, he might yet fight off the effects, perhaps. He turned up to the hard light of the clearing sky a face of yellow pallor, strained, contorted with the desperate battle against encroaching oblivion. There pierced into his brain a child's shrill shriek, like the yelp of a little dog being hurt. It roused him to try once more to stop the mob. But he was no longer in the forefront, in a position where he might perhaps secure attention. He was up above a huddling mass that was all about him. He must get down if he could and keep ahead. As he started to do so, another random shot was fired from among the workmen. He knew that a bullet went through his hand, through the hollow of his palm, but he hardly felt it. He was down from the pile of beams, in the current of the crowd. It was pushing, beating, scratching, choking, some trying to fight back, some struggling to get on and at the throats of the invaders. He was dragged down, sucked under as one is sucked beneath the surface by an undertow, into the strange livid light, amid the whirling sand and the dark rocks. He caught at hands, at coats, then at legs and feet, then his fingers dug into the mud. Up above him was a long-drawn wild beast's *yarr*.

It died vaguely in his ears.

An hour later the restaurant of the Halloran woman was become a hospital. Upon the floor, pushed now to one side by the body of a watchman who was also

past need of care, lay Farraday. His weary, patient limping through a life of bootless toil was at an end ; and what had been the deep-lined, worried, good-humored face, with its pathetic blue eyes, was covered now with a coat, that the sight of the features, marred and crushed and blood-caked beyond recognition, might be spared. He had been beaten to death by three of the men who once had been his fellow-laborers, who had caught him and brought him to the ground with clubs and stones.

On a long table at the farther end lay Clement, alive, but unconscious and seriously injured. A doctor was working with him, and Laura Halloran was clinging to one of his arms, calling upon him with cries and moanings : out of all reason through grief and terror.

And on another table, the same one at which he had sat earlier in the morning to drink his coffee, Manning was stretched at his length. They had bound up his hand and washed the mud and the stains of blood from his face. The wet, dark hair was plastered back from his forehead. There was a cut above his temple where a boot heel had hit. After a time he opened his eyes, and they helped him to rise and to go to a chair. And when he could listen, they told him so much as they knew, up to now, of the results of the fight. The tug captain had been killed,—shot—by whom it was not known. A policeman,

three of their own men, and four of the new ones, were dead. The yards were in possession of the company's forces. No women had been seriously hurt, though one child had been trampled upon. No,—they told him, when he asked,—it had not been one of the little Farradays. Those were safe. But their father—they pointed to the two still figures on the floor by the wall. One of those was Farraday.

A man came up to where Manning sat. “Who done for you?” he asked; “the scabs?” Manning raised himself from the chair and stood erect, gray-faced, and with swimming head, holding on to the nearest shoulder. “No—you,” he answered grimly,—“and for yourselves.”

CHAPTER XVI

We came : the dust storm brought us : who knows where the dust
was born ?

Behind the curtains of heaven and the courts of the silver morn ;
We go where the dust storm whirls us, loose leaves blown one by
one

Through the light, toward the shadows of evening, down the tracks
of the sloping sun ;

We are blown of the dust that is many, and we rest in the dust
that is one.

UPON more than one occasion the mistress in the school and the sisters in the convent had had to use their authority to discourage upon the part of the maidens under their care an all-absorbing, work-im-peding devotion to their sweetly and serenely indif-ferent companion, Beatrice Tennant ; against whom it appeared to be impossible to hold any charge of hav-ing, by conscious word or act, brought about the state of mind which interfered with serious work, with any-thing but a desire to gaze upon and be near her, antici-pating her least wish or fancy. And since she had left school, Beatrice had not altogether escaped from these infatuations upon the part of her own sex. There had been occasions when she had wished that the mistresses and sisters might still have been able to interfere and

save her from feminine attentions that irked and bound her not a little.

She uttered the wish to herself now, as her maid brought a card into her bedroom, and, obeying the request to read it—since Beatrice was at the moment engaged in making fast her veil—gave the information that the caller was Miss Evelyn Woolmer.

Miss Woolmer, only daughter of the coke magnate, excused, upon the grounds of much occupation with serious things, the fact that Miss Tennant did not return one in ten of her own visits, and forgivingly presented herself at the Tennant house with great frequency. And always, it seemed to Beatrice, at the minute when she was the least wanted.

Miss Woolmer's qualities were of the sort which usually cause the possessor to be described as a sweet little girl. The most exhausting manner of passing an hour which Beatrice was able to conceive was to spend it in conversation with her; and she had never felt less like exerting herself to the effort than she did to-day. Yet, as Miss Woolmer must have seen the trap waiting at the door, it was not possible to send down by the footman any message of excuse; and unless Beatrice wished to forego her drive and spend the rest of a fine afternoon within doors, the only course remaining was to ask the girl to drive with her. This, upon going

into the drawing-room, she did ; and she was afterwards able to look back upon the quick and pleased acceptance as the slight chance upon which had turned her father's death, the change of direction and end of her own entire life.

"I can send away my own carriage," Miss Woolmer said with alacrity. "You can leave me at home, can you not, dear?" "To be sure," answered Beatrice, unconsciously sealing fate.

Miss Woolmer had imitated Miss Tennant in so far as to have a boy for her own footman, but beyond that the resemblance ceased. For the undersized youth who, obedient to his mistress's behest, stood erect with folded arms by the step of the little Victoria was an absurd figure in doeskin, varnished top boots, a silk hat, and a coat just escaping his meagre knees and spreading into a wide skirt. Miss Woolmer, as Beatrice knew, was inclined to look upon him as, in a way, a monument to her own unexceptionable knowledge of the suitable and correct. She told him now that he and the carriage would no longer be wanted for the afternoon, and when Miss Tennant's trap drove up to the block, she took her place in it. The groom gave the reins into Beatrice's hands and the little black mare went briskly along the drive.

Half an hour later Manning saw the trap come out through a gate of the driving park and stop,

that his own street-car might pass. He had recognized Beatrice at once, in spite of the white veil over her face; and though he had never himself driven, he knew that it was a sure and practised hand which drew up the nervous black mare. With who the other young woman might be, he did not concern himself. The car passed the crossing and the trap kept on up the street in the direction of the speedway outside the city.

Manning, looking after it, had his attention diverted by the voice of an old woman who sat across from him. She had already asked him a number of times where she should stop in order to reach a certain corner, and though he had promised to let her know when it should be time for her to get out, she was not to be quieted, and had to be reassured once again. He had known her for the woman whose cottage had burned and whom he had last seen wrapped in a white counterpane, wild-eyed, muttering, and forlorn. She had not seemed to him then to be altogether in her right mind, and at present she impressed him as even less sane. Evidently she was under some intense excitement, but he had other matters for concern than to speculate as to what was further disturbing her already disturbed brain. He still felt the effects of the drug which had been given him at Mrs. Halloran's restaurant the day before, and his head and body ached from the blows and trampling of many feet.

The cut upon his forehead had been sewed and was covered with plaster, and the left hand, which the Greek's knife and the bullet had mutilated, was bandaged. Both caused him not a little pain. He was aware, too, that he presented a sorry spectacle, with his face drawn and more pale than usual, the plastered forehead, and the wrapped hand. His appearance might easily have lent corroboration to the report which had been spread in some of the public prints, that he had been drunk at the time of the fight in the yards. And apart from his physical condition, which was, in point of fact, such as to make him hardly fit to be in motion, he had behind him ignominious and complete failure, before him the necessity for planning his immediate future. What it was to be, he was more than uncertain. The chance was excellent that he would now be blacklisted over the entire country, and so kept from getting the work to which he had been trained, — unless indeed he should go away and change his name, as a large number of the other Staunton men would doubtless do. He was prepared to go away, — that was inevitable, but he was not a criminal to be assuming names other than the one which he had always creditably borne, and he had made the definite determination not to be driven into any such course, to whatever other extremities he should be brought. That these extremities might well be desperate, he had seen too much of conditions in his own class not to fully

know. He was now on his way to make arrangements for leaving the neighborhood within the next few days, since the violence of the morning before had destroyed the last chance for gaining public sympathy, or inducing the new men to relinquish their positions. The work of the advisory committee was at an end, and it had accomplished absolutely nothing.

The sickening after effects of the drug, the aching head and body, the throbbing of the cut above his temple, and the hurt of the bullet wound were nothing to the dead, heavy sense of failure; defeat in everything at the outset; the whole of his youth made worthless, a disheartening memory; his future very probably ruined, holding nothing but dreary work until, at fifty, he would be in the eyes of employers who would no longer want him an old man past his industrial worth.

With his usual faculty for keeping several things upon his mind at once, he remembered to have the car stopped when it came to the place at which Mrs. Dorne wished to get off. He saw her walk away, and it occurred to him that she was going in the general direction of the Tennant house, the roof of which he could just make out above the tree-tops.

When he had finished what he had to attend to in the lower part of town, and had made arrangements to leave for another state two days later on, he took the car again, with the intention of going

back to Staunton ; but as he neared the corner where Mrs. Dorne had got out an hour before, there came to him the wish to see Beatrice's house, at the least, and possibly to catch a passing glimpse of herself as a memory to be carried off with him into the new and little hopeful life he was facing. He was hardly fit to walk, every movement being an exertion and a throb of pain, but it was not far to the Tennant place and he could reach another line of cars again some squares beyond it. If Beatrice were not already at home, she must, he counted upon it, return very soon, as it was already twilight, and he might see her as she should drive into the grounds.

She was not, however, in sight upon the wide street. He felt a bitter disappointment, one which he knew to be childish and unreasonable, since no possible change in anything as it now was could result from his merely having a passing glimpse of her. Yet he felt not only sick in body, but sick at heart as well, with the thought of going away from what had been always his home, the only neighborhood he had known,—going away to a miserable uncertainty, and to where he would in all likelihood never see again this young girl, the hearing of whose voice, the look of whose quiet brown eyes, the casual touch of whose slender fingers, had made for him the best in his life through his manhood's five years.

He went a little way beyond the house, then turned and walked back to pass it again. The shadows under the trees were heavy, and the twilight was falling. Until he was almost face to face with another man who was approaching at a quick swinging pace from the opposite direction, he did not realize that it was Tennant. Tennant gave him a quick glance, without any sign of having recognized him, but after a few steps turned his head and looked again. Manning did not see this. He reached the corner of the square and turned back with the intention of passing the gate once again, then—whether he should have seen Beatrice or not—keeping on to the street-car line. He noticed that Tennant had stopped by some shrubbery and was bending over, scratching the earth of a flower-bed with the ferrule of his cane. But Beatrice was nowhere visible. He quickened his walk and went on. It seemed to him, when he had gone some distance, past magnificent houses and beautiful gardens in full spring green, that he heard the reports of a pistol fired quickly four times. He stopped and looked back. But the street remained quiet and, at the moment, deserted, and he came to the conclusion that he felt unequal to retracing his steps for the satisfaction of a not very keen desire to know what had happened. If some one had been shot, he would hear of it the next day. In the meanwhile

the night was coming, and he wished to get back to Staunton.

* * * * *
Beatrice Tennant, alone in her trap, drove up to the steps of the house and found her own coachman waiting for her. Even in the failing light it seemed to her that his face was scared and excited.

Had anything happened? she asked at once, feeling a sudden, unreasonable nervousness herself. "Your father, Miss Tennant," he said in a muffled voice. "Don't be frightened. Only the doctor's been sent for; he is hurt."

Beatrice was upon the ground. "Hurt?" she questioned hurriedly.

"Shot, miss," answered the coachman, the excitement and love of spreading it getting the better of his intention to remain ambiguous. "Shot twice through his body by one of them strikers, he says—by that fellow Manning."

Beatrice hardly heard it as she passed the maid who had come to the door to meet her, and, having been told that her father was in his own room, hurried running up the stairs. She felt painfully the sudden loneliness of the great, gorgeous house, blazing with lights. If Evelyn Woolmer had not come—if she herself had done that which she had intended to do, and gone down to her father's office to drive him home! As she reached the landing and went swiftly down the hall to the room,—about

whose open door a group of servants clustered, and from which seemed to come out only a silence which could be felt,—the coachman's words came back to her as if she had just heard them, in the manner that words sometimes will, a perceptible length of time after the sound of them has ceased. "Shot twice — by one of the strikers — by that fellow Manning." She did not believe it. There was some mistake.

But she had reached the door. Her father, still in his gray business suit, but covered from below the arms, was lying upon a couch in the bay-window. Only his man and her own maid were with him, standing aimlessly, waiting and looking at him.

Whatever Beatrice had expected, it was surely not to be met with a smile and an almost casual "I told them to be careful not to frighten you — but they seem to have done it." Except that his face was blue and damp, and that his eyes showed mortal pain and the coming of death, he might have lain himself on the lounge to rest after a busy day. If there was any bleeding, the signs were hidden by the gay Italian blanket which had been put over him.

As she bent down to him with a question on her lips, his look turned to some one behind her, and he smiled again. "I am sorry I have had to trouble you, doctor," he said. "Another bullet or a higher aim might have kept it from being pressing. But the results of firing low are apt to be slow, I believe."

The surgeon laid his hand upon Beatrice's shoulder and put her gently aside. He lifted the silk blanket. "Perhaps —" he turned to Beatrice — "perhaps it would be as well for you to come back a little later. I can send for you if you are needed. There will be one of my colleagues here within a few minutes — and a nurse."

She accepted the dismissal and went obediently away. As she reached the hall she caught Manning's name in her father's steadied voice. She stopped and listened deliberately. "I have already had the police notified," she heard. "But I may as well tell you, too, that I met him loafing around the outside of the grounds, and within a couple of minutes afterward, while I was looking at one of the flower-beds, I was shot by some one hidden in the shrubbery. Two of the shots must have gone wild ; but I fell, unfortunately, and by the time the servants came there was no one near."

The second surgeon was hastening down the hall under the guidance of the footman. He spoke to her, passed in, and shut the door.

CHAPTER XVII

. . . et pour ces messieurs dont il est question, je connais leurs familles and leurs biens, et je veux résolûment que vous vous disposiez à les recevoir pour maris.

. . . and as for these gentlemen whom we are discussing I know their families and their properties, and I intend that you shall prepare yourselves to take them as your husbands.

—MOLIÈRE. *Les Precieuses Ridicules.*

WITH a final warning against allowing her father to be subjected to the least excitement, the surgeon held open the door of Beatrice's sitting-room and allowed her to pass out. Then he went back to sit by the fire, which in spite of the mildness of the night she had had lighted, and to rest during the ten minutes which he had given her to remain with Tennant.

Beatrice went down the long, wide hall, the soft stuff of her dressing robe making no sound, her footsteps muffled by the thick carpet. It was almost midnight. None of the servants were in sight. Only one light burned in the hall. There was a strong, suggestive odor of anæsthetics and disinfectants. The loneliness of the great, deserted house, with all its many chill, unentered, unoccupied apartments, her own loneliness in the midst of it, came over her more than ever before.

There had been no one to help her stand firm under that which the surgeon had just told her—with a practised kindness which made her realize drearily the number of times he must have told it to others before. She had had to face it alone, as best she could, with no human being to whom she might turn, who might give her a steadying touch of the hand. That she had not outwardly faced it with discredit to her courage, she knew. The surgeon had commended her calmness and good sense. Reassured by it, he had told her that she might, for a very few minutes, go to her father, who was insisting upon seeing her.

Tennant's room was hardly more light than the hallway. Only one nurse remained in it, putting in order the bandages and appliances which the surgeons had used. Tennant himself was lying in the bed, his face no longer gray-blue and pain-drawn as it had been a half-dozen hours before when she had seen him last, but bloodlessly white, damp and relaxed with weakness.

As Beatrice took the chair by his side he turned his head slightly toward her. She saw that he tried to speak once or twice before he could bring his voice to be heard. When he did, it was hardly more than a whisper.

"They have told you?" he asked, smiling with unsteady lips.

She laid her hand softly upon his head. "They have told me that there is hope yet," she answered. She

knew from the surgeon that he had asked for the truth, and had been allowed to hear it.

"We both know what that means," he said, as indifferently as if it had been some impersonal matter he referred to and not his own near-coming death. His eyes went toward the nurse.

"Send her out," he said, with his usual disregard for appearances of courtesy toward those whom he hired. The nurse's trained ears heard before Beatrice could put the order into less objectionable words, and she left them alone together.

Tennant did not speak at once. He was either choosing his words or gathering strength. Beatrice bent her head nearer, to lose no sound, and put him to no avoidable effort.

When she sat back again she drew her hand from his forehead instinctively, almost unconscious that she did so. The new affection for him which had risen in her as he lay weak and dying had left her irrevocably. He had asked her to promise that she would marry Valerio as soon as possible after he himself should be gone; but she could not help knowing it not to have been a wish to have the certainty that when he should leave her she would pass to the care and protection of a husband. It was that he — who had begun life the nameless child of a woman of the slums — should die the father of a daughter who would soon be known as a princess. It was of himself, not of her, that he was

thinking in this last few hours — and perhaps, too, she could not avoid the suspicion, a wish to thwart the man who, though a subordinate, had held and expressed opinions opposed to his own, had taken the mental attitude of a superior who disapproves — John Durran.

He was watching her, waiting for her reply. “It is my dying request, perhaps, Beatrice,” he added, not scrupling to resort to that form of coercion which it would be impossible for her to stand against.

It occurred to her to wonder whether, if she were to refuse, he would be above holding over her threats of a financial nature. Yet she did not intend to refuse. The surgeon had warned her that immediate death would possibly be the consequence of allowing him to become moved or excited. And she would have deliberately promised anything, regardless of intention to keep her word, and not have felt her usual honesty lessened. But since the night of the ball — not yet a week past — when she had stood beside Durran on the balcony, overlooking the city and the steel-plant towns beyond, and had said that she would marry Valerio, nothing had happened which had caused her to change her mind. This death-bed request upon the part of her father was all she had needed to give her the excuse for decision.

She put her hand back upon his forehead with a touch which was still soft and gentle, but in which it seemed to her he must surely feel the inevitable lack of

tenderness. And she gave the promise that he wished. She watched the expression of gratified pride and ambition that came into his eyes, the gleam of triumph over a world which he had had to meet with all odds against him, but in the face of which he could now, as he left it, flaunt what to him was complete success. He smiled at her and thanked her. But he was not quite satisfied yet. He wished her to send for Valerio in the morning if he should himself be still alive. He saw her hesitate at that, the blood coming hotly to her face. "Or I will send for him — and tell him," he compromised. It had, to his mind, the advantage of being the more sure method. She obliged herself to consent. She looked at the watch by his bedside table. There remained still four minutes of the allotted ten. She felt herself grow cold with the resolution she took; her heart stopped for an instant, then, as she began to speak, beat with a violence which made her breathless and hesitating. She bent over him again, resting her hand very lightly upon his shoulder.

"Now that I have promised this for you, father," she said, "will you promise something for me?" He asked what it was, but delayed committing himself beforehand. She referred to what she had heard him say to the doctor concerning Manning's having been the one who had shot him.

"Yes," he answered, his mouth setting, "he is in jail now." She dared not lift her hand from his shoul-

der, but she hoped he might not feel through the coverings that it trembled. She knew the dangerous risk she was taking. No subject would so surely excite and anger him. But it was the chance of imperilling one life—which would go a little sooner or later in any case—to perhaps save one which had probably long to continue, and which was, moreover, that of a man whom she knew with absolute conviction to be innocent of this crime, imputed to him far more in a spirit of vindictiveness than of certainty. All through the hours since sunset, while she had sat in her own room waiting to hear the final report from the surgeons, she had argued with herself for and against the taking of this step, and in the end she had seen it as her undoubted duty. Unless she were to do so, a guiltless man might go to his death, when it would have lain in her power to save him.

“But I’m certain that it is a mistake, father—” she tried to keep it soothing and not argumentative. “There must have been some one else hidden in the shrubbery, waiting for you.” The head on the pillow moved in a stubborn negative. “Yet, father,” she insisted gently, “I know Neil well, much better than you do—you only remember him as a boy. You have never spoken to him since, I think. Will you not take my word for it that he could never, under any provocation, have done such a thing as this?”

“No,” he said briefly. She sat helpless. “Why—”

asked Tennant, his voice gaining with the strength of his determination to punish — “why else should he have been hanging around this house in the dusk? It was not on his way to Staunton. The men never come into this section.”

She nerved herself to the final pitch. If only the giving of a reason for the certainly damning appearance that lay in his presence in the neighborhood, if only that could perhaps serve to save him, then she would give it.

“He is going away,” she answered, “and he may have hoped he might see me for a moment, even in the distance.”

“Yes?” queried Tennant, coolly. “May I ask — why?” Beatrice told him in the fewest possible words.

The silence — in which the ticking of the watch on the bedside table was sharp and quick — seemed to last through an unending time.

Her father’s eyes, coldly contemptuous, were on her own. She met them unwaveringly.

The nurse came softly in and stood by the bedside. The ten moments which the doctor had permitted were past. Beatrice rose and put out her hand to touch her father’s forehead once again. He moved his head away. Her arm fell back at her side and she bit her lip at the hurt. She felt the impulse to leave him without a further word, as no filial habit could keep her

from thinking that he would have deserved ; but she had more than herself and her own pride to consider.

“If you think the reason I have had to give you a good enough one will you say that you have had cause to know that you were mistaken?” He did not answer. The nurse glanced at the watch suggestively. Beatrice had no choice but to turn and go.

The surgeon stood up at her entrance into her sitting-room and looked inquiringly into her face. That which, in spite of her, he evidently saw there, made him ask quickly, “There has been nothing to disturb Mr. Tennant, has there?” — “I am afraid there has,” she answered, moving to the table and resting her hand against it. “I tried to prevent it, but I had something to say to him which I could not avoid. I am sorry ; but I don’t think there has been any harm done. He was only angry and silent — not excited.”

Plainly not satisfied, the surgeon left her at once to go back to Tennant, advising her to get some rest, and promising to call her should the need arise. “It is still possible that he may recover, you know,” he repeated. “Or he may live on for days. Nothing can be helped by worrying, in any case.”

After sitting in front of the grate a little time, she left her chair and went to her bedroom. For a while she lay awake, then, her brain tired and restless, she slept fitfully and uneasily, with wide-eyed intervals, listening for a summons to her father’s bedside,

and thinking over what would be her course were her father to die without exonerating Neil Manning. She could see only one that was in justice possible — that she should give, in court if necessary, the reason for his presence near this house. He himself would never give it. He would let his life go she believed ; but he would shield her name from that publicity.

No call to her father's room came, and when not long after daylight she rang for her maid, she was told that there was no change for either the better or the worse. One surgeon had temporarily gone, and the other had returned. She sent to ask if she might not be with her father. But whether it were himself or the doctor who did not want her, the answer was in the negative. Her breakfast was brought to her, and she ate it. She sank down into her usual place in the window-seat to read the letters which came in the early mail. There was amongst them a note from Valerio, expressing his sympathy and offering his services. He had, as she knew, come to the house the night before and made inquiries. She had not seen him, though when Durran had also come, she had had him brought up to her here.

She wondered now if her father yet intended to send for Valerio, and her face grew hot again at the thought. Valerio would read so infallibly the motive actuating it all.

It was nearly ten o'clock, and she was still sitting in

the window, when one of the maids came to say that she was wanted at once in her father's room. She did not stop to coil up the heavy, loose braid of hair which fell below her waist. And supposing that her father must be sinking, she did not so much as remember that she was still in her bedroom gown.

The nurse met her outside the door and let her pass in. For the first instant she took the man who stood at the bedside to be the surgeon. Then she realized that it was Valerio. Conscious that she had been played and caught, conscious of her morning robe, of her bared neck, and the hair which fell almost loose, she stopped, flushing, her lips apart as if with a checked exclamation of protest.

Valerio turned toward her. If he saw the awkwardness of the situation in which they had both been purposely placed, if he saw that Beatrice's gown was one in which she would have preferred not to present herself before him, if he noticed that she was blushing, confused, and angry, there was not the least sign of it in his manner. He put out his hand and spoke to her kindly—a little more than that, affectionately. She knew that her father had told him, and knew that he would make it all as easy for her as lay in his power.

CHAPTER XVIII

It was from of old said, "The loser pays."—CARLYLE. *French Revolution.*

THE smoke from the mills had settled down over Staunton again, but not tranquillity. Apart from the high running excitement over the shooting of Tennant, the arrest of Manning, and of a number of men charged with having been prominent at the fight in the yards, there was also an aftermath of the whole affair in the funerals of those who had been killed.

Several had already taken place during this morning—the third since that of the one upon which they had come to their deaths. And at least one remained in prospect. For Clement had succumbed to his injuries. His case had been made more than commonly interesting by the fact that since the last breath had left the body over which Laura Halloran had hung to the end, the girl had tried twice to kill herself.

Farraday had been buried, and Nettie could not but feel the importance the funeral had given her. Mr. Lester had paid her a visit and had told her that she and the children would be provided for. He had not, however, conducted the burial service, for Farraday had

been laid in his grave by a priest of his own church. Most of the neighbors had made visits of sympathy. All this had distracted Nettie's mind from even such not very intense grief as a training making for imperturbability under either the giving or taking away of life would have let her feel. At the best childhood, being without actual conception of future or past, if left to itself, does not take greatly to heart the death even of some one to whom it has been really attached. And Nettie's childhood had never been at the best. As she had known it, births were inevitable but undesired, and deaths were merely much the same. Both births and deaths took money; but the latter furnished a somewhat compensating excitement and importance. You watched a funeral, even followed it; but you ignored yet another new baby on the street.

As a matter of fact, Nettie was more really unhappy about other things than she was about the end of her father. Primarily the baby was ailing. She was afraid it had caught cold upon the day of the fight. This worried her more than a little. And Neil was in jail.

These two matters she spoke of to Mrs. Dorne. The old woman had for the past couple of days wandered the streets of Staunton muttering and gesticulating. To-day she seemed more unmistakably crazy still. She came up to where Nettie sat on the tenement steps, holding the baby in her arms, and rocking her body

back and forth automatically by way of soothing it. It was burning with fever, as its flushed face and the dry brightness of the usually dull eyes might at once have told any one of more experience than Nettie, or less unsettled brain than Mrs. Dorne.

"I think she's sick," observed Nettie, speculatively. "She cries like that all the time."

Mrs. Dorne offered advice which Nettie determined to follow if the twenty-five cents necessary for the purchase of the soothing potion recommended could in anyway be obtained. Mrs. Dorne had used it upon her own children. That but one of six of these had survived to maturity was a fact which Nettie neither knew, nor, having known, would have drawn deductions from.

Nettie voiced her speculations as to who would be likely to furnish the quarter of a dollar. "There was Neil would give it," she affirmed; "but they pinched him last night." "Say!" she looked back into Mrs. Dorne's face with a suddenness which was without intent but which made the old creature start wildly, "I don't believe he done it, do you?" She had made the same assertion and asked the same question many times already during the day. Mrs. Dorne, whose few remaining wits the abruptness had scattered, stared at her blankly. Nettie looked at her puzzled.

"Neil — my cousin — Manning," she explained, "him

what's been bossing everything. Don't you know they run him in last night because they think he's the feller that shot old Tennant?" Nettie's voice went with a rising inflection of impatience at a stupidity which ignored the one supremely important fact of the hour.

Mrs. Dorne continued the blank and vacant stare. For a few moments it seemed that if the words had gone into her ears, they had been without effect on her brain. To an extent it was the case. She had never known Manning; and though she had heard his name, it had been only during these last few weeks when she was too taken up with her own troubles for it to make any impression upon her. If she had been directly asked now, she would have had no least idea who Manning was. But Tennant's name penetrated through her mental cloudiness, and the light it made began gradually to show forth in her little eyes, growing abruptly to an expression of pleased, self-satisfied cunning. She laid her hand on Nettie's knee, and approached her face more closely. "*I* done it — I shot old Tennant," she said triumphantly in a loud whisper. Then she drew back to note the effect of her words. It was not what she wanted, for it was Nettie now whose look was blank. It was the third or fourth time since the evening before that Mrs. Dorne had found herself ignored when she had confided the same thing. Walking back to Staunton the evening before, she had tried to tell some one whom she had met on

the bridge, but had been put off with a derisive speech. And during the morning no one of those she had approached had paid the least attention to her,—two even having turned their backs, telling her with frankness that she was crazy, and thereby inciting the children of the gutters to follow at a distance after her, jeering her as “nuttty” and a “lunatic.”

“*I* done it,” she repeated, giving, by way of emphasis, a shake to the knee upon which her hand still lay.

“O-ah!” said Nettie, in whose education respect for elders had not figured, “get out! You’re cracked.” Mrs. Dorne was exasperated.

“Cracked, am I?” she demanded, and bestowed a term which was not of endearment. “Well, I wasn’t too cracked to find out his house and wait in the bushes for him to come along. I wasn’t too nutty to pump it into him. If you don’t believe me—” she was talking loudly now — “why, here’s the pistol.” She began fumbling in a pocket among the folds of her black cotton skirt. As she did so the vacancy came in her eyes again. That she did not find the pistol there threw her back into uncertainty. Up to the point where, creeping nearer and nearer to Tennant among the snowballs and lilacs, she had finally levelled the revolver and pulled the trigger,—up to there she remembered. Beyond that it was confusion. She did not know that she had dropped the revolver upon the grass. She had no more recollection of how she

had escaped than if she had been carried through the air and set down in Staunton. "I don't think where it is," she said, giving up the search in the pocket and looking at Nettie appealingly, disappointed, and wanting to be helped out. "But I *ain't* cracked," she insisted pathetically. "He kilt my husband and my son, and he sent them to burn up my house,—” she mumbled over her woes, staring into the troublous past,—“and so I kilt him. It was a good thing.”

Nettie had begun to believe it at last. A suspicion of the truth was coming to her. She got up and went into the tenement.

When she came out she had left the baby with a friend, and she started upon a breathless run for Lester's office.

Half an hour later the clergyman had traced Mrs. Dorne to where she sat at the foot of the hospital steps gazing out over Staunton and the hills beyond. He had himself talked to her, and by more circumspect and humoring methods than Nettie's, had gathered so much sufficiently coherent detail as to make him believe that Mrs. Dorne's self-accusations were not the imaginings of an irresponsible brain, but the truth. And before the blowing of the five o'clock whistle the old creature was no longer wandering, jeered at and persecuted, about the sidewalks of Staunton; she was properly confined in the city. And influence and sufficiently convincing arguments and proofs having been

brought to bear in the proper quarters, Manning was set at liberty.

He went back to the mill town and to his own room at once, escaping as quickly as possible from the questions and congratulations of those whom he met in the streets. Although he had been so soon released, and practically cleared of suspicion, he felt the humiliation of having been arrested and for almost twenty-four hours in the cell of a jail; and he disliked being spoken to about it, being pointed out, and talked over as one who had been accused of attempt to murder, and held upon the charge. He knew that however completely he should be exonerated, it would still be repeated to his discredit that he had been apprehended and jailed as an assassin. Though it would be proven unjust, it would have a certain influence upon the minds of most who knew of it. Only by an effort of will and reason would he be able to keep his eyes from dropping before those of others. The somewhat overweening self-confidence which had had, heretofore, no allusion or memory to shrink from, would never again be altogether the same. He had even yielded to the inclination to escape notice as he had sat in the street-car, and had held the evening newspaper before his face. The paper was largely taken up with an account of the attempted murder, and with bulletins of Tennant's condition. There were Tennant's picture and his own. How he had himself behaved, ap-

peared, and spoken were chronicled minutely, and not always with attention to facts. He had read it all, and then, turning the sheet to go on with the account, had seen a picture of Beatrice Tennant. Underneath it, her engagement to the Prince Valerio was announced in large black type. He held the paper before him still, but it shook visibly. It was a minute or more before he went on reading. The reporter had spared no phraseology of romance as he pictured the bedside scene, wherein the daughter of the stricken steel king had plighted her troth to a prince, young, handsome, of vast estates and famous name. It was the first that Manning had known of Valerio, the first time he had thought of her as likely to marry any one save Durran. But now he recalled the dark, broad-shouldered man, with thick black hair and a pointed black beard, who had stood beside Miss Tennant in the rug-heaped hall where her portrait was upon exhibition. That, he concluded, had been the Prince Valerio.

When he was in his own room he took the tin despatch-box from the drawer of his desk and got from it the little red velvet case which held the picture of Beatrice as a child. He contrasted it with the one in the paper. The unformed, meagre child with the long, thick braid of hair, the oval face, prim and demure before the camera, had almost nothing in common with the tall young woman, above whose extremely low-cut gown

rose the thin, finely modelled shoulders and the strong neck which carried her head so well. In the tintype the hair had evidently been wet and brushed straight back, held tightly by a circular comb. In the newspaper picture it was parted loosely and coiled, with elaboration, but keeping the outline of the head, and lying upon the neck. In the tintype she wore by way of ornament only one brooch, — an affair of glass jewels and gilt which he had himself, at his mother's instigation, given her upon a Christmas day. In the other he could tell that she must have been covered with jewels, — in her hair, upon her throat and arms and hands. It was for those jewels — for the wealth they represented — that she was being taken by the Italian prince. He had no doubt as to that. His conviction was that she had loved Durran, and she was selling herself, under some compulsion, for a title. That she was doing it through ambition and her own will he would not allow himself to think. All that he knew of the bearers of titles he had got through the history of his country as it had been taught him in the public schools, and through the fanciful accounts prepared by writers for Sunday editions of the press. The knowledge was such as to make him deeply and sincerely sorry for Beatrice. Of himself, he did not now so much as think in connection with it. The last three days had put a great separation of failure and humiliation between the self-relying, competent young workingman,

confident of his ability to be what he might choose, arrogant in his mental and physical strength, his gift for leading men, and the defeated agitator, who had been disregarded by his own people,—literally trampled under their feet,—who stood accused and still under suspicion of participation in the firing of a widow's home, of drunkenness in a critical moment, of attempting a dastardly murder. He was another man from the one who had felt himself good enough to speak when he was forced to do so, of his love for a woman whose inferior he had held himself to be only in an artificial sense and as any man holds himself inferior to the good woman whom he loves. Then, no one would have been justified in resenting his avowal of a love which asked no sort of return. To-day, were anything approaching the same scene to be enacted, any man would have had a good right to knock him down for his impertinence.

Yet he had not been able to keep himself from wishing for just the bare assurance that Beatrice had not believed him to have been drunk at the fight, that she had not harbored even a momentary doubt as to his innocence of the attempt upon her father's life.

A faint sound by his door made him look in that direction. The knob was being moved cautiously, but he had turned the key as he had come in. He put the little red velvet case back in the tin box, laid

the paper with the picture of Beatrice downwards, and went to open the door. As he unlocked it, a force from the outside pushed it quickly ajar; a woman had come in, and closed and locked it again behind her. It was Mrs. Kemble.

CHAPTER XIX

Quand un outrage est public, une femme aime à oublier, elle a des chances pour s'agrandir . . . mais les femmes n'absolvent jamais des secrets offences, parcequ'elles n'aiment ni les lâchetés, ni les vertus, ni les amours secrets.

When an outrage is public, a woman likes to forget; she has a chance to exalt herself . . . but women never absolve secret offences, because they like neither secret treacheries, virtues, nor loves.

—BALZAC. *Duchesse de Langeas.*

THE angry face into which she looked, disconcerted Mrs. Kemble; and the demand for explanation in the hard eyes that met hers made explanation difficult. A possessing desire to see him had brought her here. Now that she was come, the manner in which he met her was a dash of cold water, making her take in her breath, bringing her back to her senses. She returned to flat reality as one wakes from some intense dream which has shaken and wrought upon one physically. Her heart was still beating hard with the stress, her brain quivering; and it was not now by irresistible impulse that she raised her arms and laid her hands on his shoulders. "Neil!" she said, and the failure to give it the ring of intense feeling was sensible, "Neil—I happened to see Mr. Lester. He told me; and I had to come. I had to see you.

"I have been wretched — miserable." It was not true, and it had not the note of truth. That which she had been was not wretched and miserable, but restless, perturbed, and uneasy.

He stood as he was, still with her hands upon his shoulders, still with his own hands as they had been when she had come in, the injured and bandaged one thrust partially into his pocket, the other hanging at his side. At his most forbidding he had never looked as he did now, — his whole expression changed by the ordeals of the last few days. A bruise was dark and ugly over his forehead and one side of his face ; the cut above his temple was still barred with surgeon's plaster. He continued looking down into her face with an anger which did not trust itself to words. Even in the softening light of the late afternoon she did not bear such proximity well. The handsome, large-modelled features were coarse, the even-colored skin thick and rough and porous. Yet just the perception of the physical grossness and actuality which might have been the strongest moving power, the drawing of like to like, the gravity of nature to nature, acted, in his present temper, not as a drawing but as a violently repelling force. The brute that it stirred in him now was anger. This was all that was needed to complete his degradation, — that he should be forced into relations with this woman who was deliberately putting herself to do it, and in a way which rendered

as good as certainty what had all along been his strong belief, that she had been obtainable for others before himself. The attempted compulsion of it infuriated him. If there was to be any calculated, planned following up, cornering, compelling, he did not intend to be the object of it. It was not the normal situation of the male, and he revolted in anger against it.

And at any moment the men would probably begin to come here to see him. The door was locked, to be sure, and he need not open it; but he did not like the situation of skulking behind it, not speaking, holding his breath until they should have turned away. The woman who kept the house knew that he was in. Quite possibly Mrs. Kemble had been seen coming up.

"Neil!" she repeated now, afraid of his silence, of the gleam in his eyes,—which was not that before brought there by her nearness,—yet kept from real timidity by the vanity which made her believe that he could be won over. "I know I ought not to have come. But I had to see you. I couldn't bear it any longer."

"Do you know that women don't come to this house?" he said. The word was a classification of her, but she was not sensitive with regard to that.

"Nobody saw me," she excused it. What he had felt all along, this convinced him of. The force which impelled her was not one so all-controlling as to blind her to consequences to herself.

She tried to slip her hands from his shoulders and clasp them behind his neck. He put her off, then. She repeated his name in a voice which tried to be imploring, but only succeeded in being wheedling.

"I wish you would go away," he told her with brutal truthfulness. "There are likely to be men here at any minute."

How could she go while he was still angry? she pleaded. "You are cruel, Neil. You are breaking my heart."

He laughed curtly, and made a movement toward the door with some thought of opening it and leaving it open, thereby forcing her to be gone. But with that common bravado of women which is one of their most unworthy traits, that perfect willingness to take undue advantage of an immunity from bodily harm granted them in generosity, she did now that which she had done in her own house, — placed herself in such a position that he would have had to set her aside by strength. He turned short about, that he might not yield to a desperate temptation to throttle her, and went over to stand at one of the windows, his back to the room. She noiselessly slipped the key from the lock and put it into her pocket. Then she went forward to the desk which was close behind him.

"How can you be so cruel to me?" she begged, addressing the massive shoulders in the most pathetic voice she could bring. "I love you. I would do any-

thing for you. You love me too, if only you wouldn't stand out against it."

So this was the interpretation she had put upon his leaving her defeated in the dark, musty, little parlor of her own house! This was what accounted for her having worked his wish with her old husband, when he had expected nothing less than vengeance!

She repeated again that she would do anything for him. He faced about, determining suddenly to try another method of ridding himself of her. And it was a test as well, from which he derived a kind of grim amusement.

Did she know, he asked, that he was about to leave Staunton and go into the world, almost without money, utterly without certainty of work, probably black-listed? That which he had expected, he saw. She was disconcerted and she showed it unguardedly.

Unready with an answer, she looked down at the desk and turned the newspaper over. The picture of Beatrice Tennant was there, but she had already seen it at home and she did not notice it now. Nor did Manning, who was intent upon her face, heed what she was doing. She looked up again. "But you can get back into the mills here," she temporized. "I am sure you can. Why should you go away? You may have to stand turn, or be a day-laborer, or not get any job at all, most likely. You'd much better stay here."

It was as he had thought. She was not so incautious as to recklessly declare her willingness to follow him anywhere, through anything. What she wanted was to have him stay here, where she might have him without discomfort or deprivation. Perhaps in a moment of such unwonted self-abandonment as that in her own house the last time he had seen her, she might have rashly declared her intention of following him to the ends of the earth, through any amount of trial, but not now.

He turned back to the window. She realized that she had not taken it in a way convincing of her sincerity. And she tried to talk the bad impression away, to bring him over, not, though, relinquishing her intention of keeping him here at Staunton. Conscious that she had made a false move and had put herself upon the defensive, she grew more and more nervous, and as she had just been fingering the newspaper on the desk, now she fingered the handle of the black tin box. When he had dropped the picture case back into it, he had merely closed it quickly, leaving it there and then forgetting it. Why could he not stay here? she pleaded. "We could be happy here — if you would only let us be, Neil. Why have we both got to suffer because I married an old man when I was too young to know what I was doing?"

She had been married to Kemble not half a dozen

years, and a very obvious calculation was sufficient to throw doubt upon the exactness of the plea of youth and inexperience. No reply came, and she could not see his face to note what effect her words were having. Her eyes fell to the black tin box. Without knowing that she had done so she had opened the cover and laid it back. Looking absently down into it, she became gradually aware that there lay in it a little red velvet photograph case. It was shut. She threw a sidelong glance at Manning. His back was still unrelentingly turned. She opened the case quickly. There was a tintype in it—of a child—a little girl. She bent warily down.

Then she sprang up, erect, her head tossed back, her face grown livid, the case in her hand. The years since the tintype had been taken had changed Beatrice Tennant, but not too much for the resemblance to be still unmistakable. And Mrs. Kemble had not only seen the quaint and faded picture, she had seen, too, a dried rose lying on top of a small package of clippings. In a flash there had come to her all that she had seen upon the day when she had watched from behind the curtains of her room—all that she had seen, and more which she now guessed. It had been a rose that Miss Tennant had dropped, and which Manning had stooped to pick up from the sidewalk before he had gone on his way. This was the rose. And there was the news-

paper picture of Miss Tennant, which had been turned face down !

It had all come to her in a quick instant, and Manning, turning toward her now again, saw a face ashen and contorted with rage.

She had received three wounds at once, — to her vanity, her jealousy, and her passion. And the madness of fury they brought her to was beyond anything that his experience with even the worst of men or women had yet shown him. He fell back a step before it. She followed, thrusting her convulsed and discolored face up into his, raging hysterically in a tempest of abuse and invective, of unmeasured and salacious language which a drunken drab, fighting in the streets, might have failed to find ready to her tongue. Her voice cracked and shrilled with the paroxysm. She caught hold of him with one hand and shook the other, a clenched fist, before his eyes. He saw that it grasped something — something red. Then he knew. It was the little tintype of Beatrice. Before he could seize the wrist which he would have snapped now to get the picture, she had given it a vicious jerk that sent the case out of the open window into the street. And suddenly jumping back she caught up the dry rose, crushed it to powder, and flung it at his mouth. With a blow of her knuckles she sent the despatch-box banging to the floor, all its papers scattered. She seized the newspaper and tore it in half through the picture,

throwing that, too, in his face. Every term which the trollop of the street levels at another of her kind, she put with Beatrice's name. He took hold of her, set her aside, and went to the door. It was locked. "Give me the key," he said. She put her hand in her pocket, drew out the key, and sent that, too, out of the window. The old-fashioned knob was strong, but the lock, as it happened, had for some time been loose and shaking. He got a purchase on the knob and burst the door open. He had used both his hands, and the blood began to drip from the bandaged left one, the wound of which he had strained. But at the exhibition of his strength Mrs. Kemble's voice had stopped instantly.

Manning looked over the balusters and down the stairs. Apparently the sound of quarrelling had not brought any one into the hallways. It was just the hour when most of the men were usually out, and the proprietress in the kitchen getting her own dinner. No one was in sight. He told Mrs. Kemble so. She showed signs of hesitating and refusing to go. Then thinking better of it, she straightened her hat, and with her head thrown far back and an unsteady, twisted sneer on her lips, she went past him. He put out his hand and stopped her. "I want you to understand that I mean it," he told her, "when I say that you had better not speak of Miss Tennant to any one — to *any* one," he enforced it. She spit at him a laugh

of contempt. But it was evident that she was cowed now.

He followed her closely down the stairs to keep her from getting first to where the case with the tintype should be and possessing herself of it. They came upon no one in the halls or front yard. Mrs. Kemble went out through the gate. Manning found the velvet case, put it in his pocket; looked for the key, and, finding it also, went back to his room to care for the bleeding hand.

In her own house Mrs. Kemble's fury had time to settle down into a savage but silent wrath before her husband came home. He recognized at once that her temper was evil, but he had seen it so before. And he was too full of his own bad news to pay much heed to her ill humor. He told her of it. He had been refused work at the mills. The amnesty publicly granted to all of the old workmen who should care to return to the plant did not, it appeared, extend to those who had served upon the committee.

"We have got to give up our house, my dear," he said sadly, the tears in the mild eyes faded and weak from long years of looking into terrible pits of fire. "We have got to go away from here and hunt a new job. And I am an old man, a broken old man. There ain't much use for old men like me in the industrial world these here days. I'm fifty. I'm dying slow. The work has killed me before my time." In the last

few weeks his cough had grown more severe, and it now shook him until he was breathless. Then his square, gray beard dropped on his chest. His wife had sat rigidly silent. "I'm fifty, and I've worked honest all my days. And now I'm used up," he repeated drearily. "I've got to go out and begin life over again—with the chances against me at every turn. It's a world that ain't much use for its old men that have done their best, but ain't somehow seemed to succeed—ain't had the gift of Providence maybe to be able to do more than their regular shift. And yet—there's got to be some, a plenty, that ain't above the average; that can only do the thing lying before them and do it faithful. And when they're old they've got to live—they can't be shot?"

It ended in his usual tone of questioning, as if asking from the world in general a corroboration of his vague ideas. The tears had gathered on his seared lids and now they trickled down his face and beard, falling upon his clasped and trembling hands. After a minute he wiped them away with the back of his wrist. "I let myself think—I let myself look ahead—and I done what I believed was right," he defended himself. "But I hadn't ought to have tried it. It ain't for such as me to have opinions and a conscience, but to take what them in power gives me and do my work till I drop and get kicked out. That's where I made my mis-

take. And now I'm paying for it. And what's worse — what's worse" — he reached out his hand to his wife — "is that you may have to pay for it, too." She looked at him without the least pity, ignoring the outstretched, shaking hand. "But I ain't *going* to pay for it," she said decisively. "I ain't going to either do without or work. And I don't have to. If—" she was giving each word its weight of meaning — "if *you* ain't able to support me — there are them that *will*."

CHAPTER XX

When beggars die there are no comets seen,
The Heavens themselves blaze forth the death of Princes.

— *Julius Cæsar.*

WHEN the morning came over the green, thick-wooded hills that lay beyond the dreary territory of close-packed houses and mills, when the uprolling steam from thousands of stacks was turned to silver against the black smoke clouds, and the gold lights and long shadows of sunrise fell upon unnumbered roofs, the light of the new day was shut out from the silent room of a granite mansion where one of the greatest lay dead. But it came between the strips of ragged and dirty calico at the windows of a tenement room wherein one of the least was giving up a life which from its first beating beneath the shrunken breasts of an overburdened mother had been foredoomed as without hope.

Tennant had died in the night, quite clear-headed, without qualms or fear, fully satisfied with what he had forced from an adverse world. He had had the consciousness that he had beaten opposition at every turn; that even then there were working amid the fires and thunders of his mills at Staunton

the men who had dared for a time to stand against his will; that the gates were thronged with applicants for the privilege of accepting without question what terms he had been pleased to grant; that those who did not seek the privilege, or who had been refused it, were facing want,—it might be starvation. When breath had ceased to come from the drawn and sunken lips, there seemed to remain upon them still the thin smile which he had worn always as he encountered resistance and defeated it. The child of unfelt shame, born in a hovel of the slums, he had died in a palace of gray and glittering stone, a conquering captain of the world.

But Nettie Farraday's baby still lived on through the dark hours and into the day. It had lain all night on the blanket-covered rag mattress placed—for want of a bed—upon the floor. The little boys had had another blanket, without a mattress, and an old skirt of their mother's had covered them. Nettie herself had slept, as best she could, beside the baby.

A neighbor across the hall had given Nettie the benefit of her advice and of a brew which she recommended as cheaper and more efficacious than old Mrs. Dorne's favored remedy. She had come in several times before going to bed, looked at the baby, and reassured Nettie as to the seriousness of the trouble, which was only, she pronounced, a cold and fever. She had approved the suggestion

that a piece of sickly yellow peach pie which Nettie had brought from the restaurant might be a good thing to tempt a capricious appetite. That the baby would not eat had been one of Nettie's chief causes for uneasiness. But she had been able to induce it to take a little of the pie, and had felt thereby somewhat encouraged.

It was the thought that the cold had been caught on the morning of the fight, when she had refused Manning's request to take the children home, which worried Nettie. Several times during the night she had lighted the bit of candle she had borrowed from the friendly neighbor, and had looked at the flushed face, giving a drink of water to the little parched lips.

Now by the daylight she could see that the face was no longer feverish, but white with purple hollows about the great eyes, and the blue veins on the forehead more than ever plain. She took this to be a hopeful sign, as she did also that the baby had ceased to fret and lay quite still and good. The little boys were still asleep, and there was no reason for waking them. She went over upon tip-toes to the window, and stood there looking down into the dirty and miserable street where the laborers and workmen passed on their way to and from the plant. She wondered how long it would be before Mr. Lester would carry out his promise of providing for them all in some orphan asylum. It was a promise which she regarded

rather as a threat. No asylum had come within her twelve years of experience; but she had questioned about it, and had been told that the four of them would have to be taken over to the city and be separated. That had filled her with dread. She knew Staunton, she knew everybody in her neighborhood. She did not know the city or anybody in it. And as for being separated from the others—the thought of it raised resistance in her stanch little soul. She did not want the children to be taken away from her. They were all that she had. And the baby—what would happen to it without herself to look after it? She did not want to go to an asylum—she determined rebelliously that she would not. She would take the children and run away—hide where Mr. Lester and her own priest (who was helping in it all and making the arrangements) could not find them. She had seen Neil the night before for a few minutes. He had come to the tenement. And he had told her that he was going away to-day. She would go to him and ask him to take them too.

A slight sound, like a weak plaint, came from the corner where the baby lay. Her ear, which had the quickness of a maternal solicitude, heard it. She went at once to the mattress. The baby's eyes were wide open, very wide. Their look was curiously vacant, and the lips were apart as if breath were being struggled for. Nettie wondered if it were all right—

or was something the matter? She stood with her head on one side watching, debating whether she had not better call the woman from across the hall. And even as she decided to, there came a sudden change — the eyes rolled up in their sockets, the jaws clenched and the lips shrunk back ; a bluish tinge came over all the face ; the tiny, fleshless arms were thrown out, then stiffened — the fists tight-shut. In the moment that Nettie hesitated, in her fright, it was over. The contracted muscles relaxed, the eyes stared glassy, and the baby was still.

For a long minute Nettie stood looking down. Then she bent over and felt of the bits of arms, of the face, of the neck. She lifted the head and shoulders tentatively — then let them drop back. She knew. And springing erect, her face wild with her fear, she gave one loud shriek of terror at this Thing with which she was all alone in the gray dawn. It was a wail for help. But the neighbors out in the hallway were accustomed to noise and cries. If they heard, they paid no heed. Only the two boys, wakened now, scrambled out from under the tattered skirt, and went across the floor to where their sister had thrown herself on her knees, and lifting the poor little rigid body of which she was afraid, was trying to shake it back to that life which a sometimes merciful Providence had willed it to escape.

They stood together, puzzled, — crying because they too were frightened, — observing questioningly.

CHAPTER XXI

Parceque le caractère commande, qu'il commande même au sentiment.

Because character dominates, dominates even sentiment.

—*Journal de De Guibert.*

THAT same faculty in human nature which has in all ages enabled the average mind to, in matters of faith, believe dogmas absolutely untenable to reason, frequently shocking to the finer sense, and opposed to every revelation of experience or of the visible world, is quite as potent in enabling us to actually feel, under certain conditions, the emotions which those conditions are generally expected to arouse. And especially is this true as regards woman, sentimental, conservative, aye — retrogressive woman, temperamentally the foe of intellect; who is like the youth since infancy imprisoned in the dark and who struggled against being brought into the light, suffering because of it.

Man, freed from a bond of untruth, can feel with elation that a fetter has fallen from his soul. But, whether it be inherently or by force of long tradition, woman's first consciousness is that of shame, as it were a garment withdrawn from her modesty. A man may boast

that he has outgrown a fable of faith, a woman will defend herself for it. A man may accept it and let it pass as a fact that he does not weep or does not rise to transports where it is commonly looked for that he should. A woman shrinks from herself, in such a case, as one unnatural, in some way an unpleasant anomaly.

It was some such feeling that Beatrice Tennant experienced when, the day after her father had been buried, she faced the future and her absolute loneliness, and had to realize that she was more conscious of independence than of grief. It seemed to her that there must be in herself something unfeminine, unhuman even, that her heart was not wrung over the death of her father — the one parent she had known. Though there had never been any real affection between them, it would have been right and proper to feel miserable and inconsolable. That she actually did not, made her almost aghast at herself. Yet what she felt was something very nearly relief from the dominance of a personality which had always, consciously or unconsciously, had the effect of sapping that of others.

As she sat in her window looking out on the grounds with all their flowers and trees, she wondered if there were not, after all, a tinge of the abnormal in her. That man the ideal stands erect, and that woman the ideal leans, she knew. But in the last two days she had not felt the inclination to lean. She had taken very naturally to standing unsupported. She had ordered

the household and all the matter of her father's burial, — with assistance, to be sure, yet still as herself the one assuming responsibility. And was she not abnormal, too, in what began to seem her inability to love? The thing which is usually accepted for the female's love — the reflection of that of the initiating male — she had never been able to make suffice for herself. In the case of Valerio she had tried to do so, but she knew now that it was impossible. She knew that she could not bring herself to marry him. So soon as idealization had changed to reality, so soon as it had been not merely in thought to live through years of pleasant companionship, amid poetic and picturesque surroundings, but to submit to the intimacy of betrothal, to take his kisses, and give her own, her whole mind and body had revolted from that and from marriage. His caresses had left her, not cold, but hotly shuddering, and she had known that there was still in her blood the saving grace of the class from which she had come, which is guided in its unions by no artificial influences. She could not take the marriage of convention as a matter of course. And to that, a refinement in herself added that she could not bring herself to it as a matter of ambition. She had a rebellious feeling that she was entitled to a stronger, a less considered love than the man who was now her betrothed was giving her. It would be impossible — she knew perfectly how utterly impossible — to tell Valerio, to tell any one, that she had

learned from a workman in her father's mills what might be the strength and depth of love in a man. Yet having learned it, she could not force herself to be satisfied with a poorer thing. There might come still the one who could give her a great and powerful devotion which she could return. If not, then — the best was enemy of the good, and she would take nothing rather than the lesser and more weak.

And she had decided already to tell Valerio this. It had seemed to her more honest to do so at once — altogether apart from the fact that she revolted against longer continuing in the position of one owing the attitude of an affianced wife. For since their engagement Valerio had become more the lover than she had expected from his former reserve of speech and deed. She had intended to let him know the truth frankly, but as kindly as possible, upon the evening before. But in this she had been prevented by the coming of both Lester and Durran with offers of sympathy and of assistance in various matters.

Lester, who had appeared before either Valerio or Durran, had told her of many things in Staunton, — of the death of the Farraday baby, of arrangements which the priest was making to have the three other children cared for in some institution, of little Mrs. Steinberg's improved condition, and of Manning's departure to another state. And she, in turn, had

given him some idea of her plans for the immediate future. If he had been surprised that Valerio's name was not foremost in them,—did not indeed transpire at all,—he had not showed it. And she had ceased to mention of plans directly Valerio had arrived.

Now, however, she meant to speak as soon as the prince should come again to see her. Had it not been for her father's break-neck haste to clinch the engagement by making it public, had he not immediately talked of it to the nurses, the doctor, and his one or two visitors, the situation would have been far less difficult. It need never have been generally known that any engagement had existed. It had suggested itself to her that most girls, placed as she found herself, would have considered public opinion sufficiently to have let things go on for a time yet as they were. But public opinion had always weighed very little with her when placed in the scale against her own wishes, reason, and sense of honesty.

Early in the afternoon Valerio came. She was in the library at the time, and she sent for him to come there. The library was panelled and furnished in dark wood, surrounded on three sides by shelves filled with books,—those books which, all unwittingly to the owner, betray that he is one to whom reading is neither a necessity nor a real pleasure,

but a duty which may be, and usually is, shirked, — books in unbroken sets of handsome, uniform bindings, anthologies, vicarious choices of masterpieces in fragments, neatly ranged, totally without that suggestion of individuality which may be had by the exterior of a volume or of a dwelling. The Tennant books, like the furniture, with which their purchaser had ranked them, had all been bought within a very short space of time. There had been plenty of money paid for them. They were such as might be vouched for as the best in respect of binding, gilt, paper, and contents. A house required a library, a library required shelves, the shelves required books. Tennant had had the books bought by the boxful, as nearly of a size as possible, of colors that would suit the room. And he had been satisfied with the effect, had contrasted it more than favorably, in his own mind, with the Durran library into which he had once or twice entered, a littered, unordered room filled to overflowing with volumes of all sizes, in all manner of dress, — usually inexpensive, frequently shabby, — and placed absolutely without regard for size and symmetry. When he had spoken of his own library, thereafter, Tennant's voice had been wont to take on a tone of importance. That there might be humor in his beautifully filled tiers would have been the last thing possible for him to understand.

Yet as Valerio came to the door and saw them, a

quiver of amusement flickered over his face. Beatrice was sitting at the big desk, which alone, in the place, had the appearance of service. The sombre woodwork, and the ceiling high rows of rich-colored leather backs, surrounded her. She was, herself, all in black, which made her light brown hair seem yet more light and gold-tinged, and, as she rose to come forward, made her slender, tall figure look more than ever supple and well proportioned.

He took her in his arms and kissed her upon the lips. She was unresponsive, but she had been so from the first, and he had never really expected her to be otherwise. It was in keeping with what he had always understood her to be. And, as she herself had sometime since realized, what he felt for her was not the quality of love which needs a responsive heart. Without perhaps having ever so formulated his opinion, he took his manner of regarding marriage from the founders of his race, and believed that the justification of the Sabine rape was at the foot of the Capitol two years afterward.

He had come with the intention of getting her to talk to him of her plans, and then, if possible, win her consent to a quiet marriage within a few days. He had not meant to come to this latter subject immediately and without preparation, but the touch of her hands and lips made it his possessing idea now. And without waiting, still holding her in his arms, he asked

softly, "Why should we not be married at once, Beatrice?"

She drew herself away and moved to a little distance from him, standing looking down at the papers she had been going over. Then she turned to him.

"Will you ever forgive me, I wonder, Alberto, if I tell you that I think we had better not be married at all?"

He took it as she would have expected,—with a sudden coldness and rigidity. Only the slight paling of his face showed any approach to the emotion which she knew that he strongly felt.

Even in a moment which was for him a crisis of no small import, his courtesy did not fail him. She was standing, and he might not himself be seated until she should be. He moved a chair for her, stood with his hand upon the back, and waited for her to take it. And though she would have preferred to remain as she was, feeling more command of herself and of the situation, she took the proffered chair almost as if under compulsion. Yet, if she had been ever so slightly undetermined before, now her decision was clinched.

She rebelled, in the first enjoyment of her absolute freedom of action, from this quiet, civil pressure of another strong personality—very like that which her own father had exercised, but sure to be even more impossible to stand against, since behind it was the

incalculable force of an imperturbable outward courtesy, — and would be the dominance of the husband.

He had himself taken a chair close in front of her. She remembered inconsequently that it was the one in which her father had sat upon the evening when Valerio had first come to the house.

He waited for her to speak again. She felt the compulsion which obliged her to do so, even as it had obliged her to cease to stand.

“Please believe that, in these last days, I have thought a great deal of what it would be kindest and best to do,” she said ; “and it has seemed to me that the longer I should let our engagement go on, the greater wrong I should be doing to you—to both of us.”

Might he ask her reasons ? he questioned, with outward composure.

“I do not love you,” she told him ; “that is all.”

“I have never asked you to say that you did,” he reminded her ; “but I had hoped to teach you to.”

She moved her head slowly in negative. “That may be possible with a certain type of woman, but by merely making a wife and the mother of your children of one like myself, you cannot attach her to you.”

He showed his disapproval of her manner of stating it. It was objectionable to him that a young and unmarried woman should have thoughts of the sort, and, still worse, put them into plain words. It struck

harshly upon his conception of her and made him almost ready to accept her decision with willingness. "Will you tell me whether you were forced by your father to accept me in the first place?" he said.

"No,—" she answered it honestly,—"I was not. He wished me to accept you. He asked me to. But I was ready to grant the request."

"You thought then that you might love me, but now you think that you do not—could not?" said Valerio.

She could tell that he did not fully trust her sincerity, but was speculating as to the ulterior motive. "Now I *know* that I could not," she corrected, a little inclined to be resentful. "Can you not understand?" She clasped her white and slender hands about her knees, leaning forward in her earnestness. "Can you not understand how a woman who has never—" she hesitated—"who has never been made love to other than in words might imagine it possible to marry a man who had proved himself congenial, companionable, for whom she really cared—in another way?"

He lifted his shoulders by way of answer.

"Yet," Beatrice went on, "when she should become actually engaged, when she should have to begin to approach the real facts—" She gave over the attempt to explain, and, with an impatient sense of the little meaning she could convey in words, left her chair and went again to the desk, shifting about the

pens and seals and pencils, in a good deal of disturbance. "If I were to marry you, I could not live with you — I should take any step. I suppose I am too independent, that I have the trait of my race which is thought a fault in a woman. But I would not stand it ; I should go away." She gave over handling the things on the desk, and faced him determinedly. "Don't you think, Alberto, that since I have discovered this in time, I am right to tell you before the harm is done. Believe me, that if I was not quite honest with either of us before, I am now. I care for you still — or at least I shall when I shall have had a little time to forget these last few days." She saw that he winced, and regretted the too entire frankness into which her wish to be absolutely sincere had led her. "But I could not marry you," she ended. "If I did, if I were to let my sentiment and my liking for many of the things you can offer get the better of my reason — I should not stay with you. I could *not*." She threw back her head and bit her quivering lip to keep it steady.

"Who has helped to teach you this — to give you the standard for contrast?" asked Valerio, in a voice which was suave, though the words with their contemptuous meaning were stung from him by a very justifiable anger at being so unflatteringly showed the revulsion which his touch had caused.

"You cannot understand it, can you?" she said helplessly. "You cannot believe that I am sincere

now, at least? No one has helped to teach me. I have no standard for contrast. There is no one that I love and there has never been."

A silence fell between them. Then Beatrice brought herself to another subject which she had decided to speak of. "There is one more thing with regard to which I want to justify myself to you," she said; "yet I think I need hardly tell you, either, that it was not I who was responsible for our engagement having become so soon a matter of public knowledge."

He bowed his head in comprehension. "I am sure of that," he said, but refrained from speaking of the very unpleasant effect which had been made upon him by what he had, from the first, guessed to be Tennant's extreme haste to circulate the news.

"It would have been much better for both of us now if it had all been kept to ourselves," went on Beatrice. "As it is, I think we had better, for a time at least, say little of our changed plans. You will be going away, I suppose — back to Italy, perhaps?"

"Yes," he told her, "probably so."

"And I will go away too for a few months — back to Paris, I think. I could stay with the Sisters there, I believe, and I have felt in the last few days that I should like to see them again."

This seemed to Valerio more suitable than much that she had said to-day. "And after that —" he asked.

"After that? I have hardly planned so far ahead," she said uncertainly. "But I shall, I suppose, be what is very rich for a woman, and my money should do good to some one besides myself."

They sat for a time longer speaking of the present and the future. Then Valerio rose to go. Beatrice held out her hand to him, a look of something even better than the old friendship and liking coming into her eyes again. He held the hand in both his own as he looked into her face.

"I have loved you," he said. "And I do love you. I have already lived too long to be able to think that love remains the same through years and separation, but I believe that there will never come a time, even at the close of my life, when I shall remember you without a deep regret."

She had nothing to answer.

"Will you write to me sometimes and let me know as much as you care to of what the years shall have brought you?" he asked. "And when there comes the hour of the surrender which could not be to me, but which some man will win yet—will you let me know?"

She promised.

She went with him to the door, and there could be before the waiting footman no further words of parting. When he was gone she turned back into the great house. The footman, his arm banded with black

for a master to whom no tie but that of pay had bound him, stood rigid as she passed him by. She moved slowly across the wide and shadowy entrance hall, and went up the stairs. There was no human sound, not even that of her own footsteps upon the deep carpets, — only the stillness from all the many empty corridors and rooms.

Her fair head bowed forward slightly as if with sadness and the conscious weight of her own great responsibilities and wealth, the black folds of her mourning falling about her, and she went on up through the silence, alone.

CHAPTER XXII

Le ciel est sourd aux prières des foibles.

Heaven is deaf to the prayers of the weak.

— *Nouvelle Héloïse.*

AT the time of his marriage to Evelyn Woolmer, Durran had bought for himself a piece of property almost directly across the wide avenue from the house which had been Tennant's. So that Beatrice, standing in one of its windows now, looked over into the grounds, and could see the very spot among the leafless bushes where her father had fallen wounded mortally, and could see, too, the white granite gleaming coldly through the driving snow, the windows of the room where her father had died, and the threshold which, seven years before, she had crossed for the last time, abandoning the house to strangers. Then she had faced the world, mistress of herself and of large wealth. To-day she was her own mistress still, but the fortune which remained to her was merely sufficient to keep her from the necessity for work.

Some weeks previously — preceded by signs and warnings to which an excellent business sense had not let her be oblivious — had come the hour when she had had

to know that so much of her capital as she had kept for herself, and had not irrevocably devoted to other purposes, was diminished to an extent which would necessitate a very great change in what had been, up to the present, her manner of life. To all outward seeming she had faced this crisis as quietly, as resolutely, as she had that other which had thrown her upon her own responsibilities with millions at her command. She had decided that she would no longer be able to keep the small but beautiful house in which she was living, that she must do without the woman whom she had had for her companion, and that she must discharge her servants.

As she had been fortunate, seven years past, in selling the big, white, granite house, she had now again been equally so in disposing of the little one of Pompeiian brick, grown over with vines and hidden from the street by lilacs and big trees. But she had loved the latter, and the former had held almost no sentiment for her, so in secret she had shed bitter tears at this second going forth. Then, with the tears dried, and with no visible emotion, she had gone out to the carriage in which Evelyn waited, and had been driven to the Durran house, where she was to remain until she should have made definite plans for her future.

* * * * *

Upon more than one occasion Evelyn had spoken to her husband of Beatrice — forcing herself not to betray

the jealousy of which she was ashamed, but which in her heart she had never been able to overcome.

“But why,” she had once asked him, “does she not enjoy her money for herself? Why does she spend it nearly all in that dull way, — on all those political and factory things?”

“Perhaps,” Durran had suggested, “it may be because she has suspicions that it was largely obtained by methods merely legally acceptable. Perhaps she is possessed of an underlying motive of restitution. Paying Paul with what has been done away from Peter is frequently the best we can do toward evening matters up in this complicated modern world.”

It was hardly in expectation of being understood that he spoke; but he had grown accustomed to holding, with his pretty and plaintive young wife, conversations which, so far as he was concerned, were practically monologues — much as one discusses one’s inmost sentiments and hopes with an affectionate dog, and precisely because it cannot understand.

Had Mr. Tennant been dishonest, then? Evelyn had asked. “On the contrary,” had answered Durran, “he was above conviction.” Her usually smooth forehead had been creased with lines of perplexity. “Well, — anyway,” she had abandoned it, “if she hasn’t done anything questionable herself, I can’t see why she should bother about making it up now. She might live splendidly, and dress and entertain superbly — and marry any one she pleased.”

A need for the expiation of parental misdeeds had never, up to then, entered into her very simple ethics. Recently, however, she had herself experienced it. Through several administrations the entire country had been swept by a great wave of unexampled prosperity. On the crest of that wave had ridden Woolmer, no longer merely a coke magnate, but become one of the world's chiefest financial dictators. The wave, risen to too great a height to longer sustain itself, had broken at last, and the multitude which had watched it in awe and admiration, believing it to be something phenomenal, unlike anything of its sort ever seen before, of a nature destined to be permanent, had come, in the end, to know that it had been, for the most part, but a mighty body of watered stocks.

The country had faced a panic, which had, however, settled down into no worse than depression and hard times, felt most severely, as usual, by the most weak and helpless, the least guilty, but affecting all interests in greater or less degree. Beatrice Tennant's money, invested as it had been in those very interests where-with Woolmer was most connected, had gone the way of much other. Whither that might be, indignant stockholders were now demanding of Woolmer and his companions through the courts.

Immediately upon learning that of which the press and public left her slight doubt, — that it was through her father's fault that Beatrice's fortune was gone, —

Evelyn had insisted that Beatrice should come to the Durran house and remain there as long as possible. Beatrice had agreed, chiefly by way of giving proof that she bore Evelyn no ill-will for Woolmer's wrongdoing. She had been without the smallest conception of the conflict with, and conquering of, self which giving the invitation had required. She did not so much as suspect that Mrs. Durran was jealous of that past of her husband's, wherein it had been common knowledge that he had wished to marry Miss Tennant — and, too, of that present, wherein he spoke with Beatrice of innumerable things which to his wife were either dully uninteresting or else meant nothing at all.

So Beatrice for twenty-four hours had been with the Durrans. Others — who, having less, had had all taken from them — were without shelter from the severity of a winter unequalled in long years. In every occupation hundreds and thousands had been turned away. Wages were everywhere either reduced or about to be so ; and the most cruel suffering was upon every side. Had the time, like that of Richelieu, brought forth another Barefooted John from the priesthood, he might have gathered together, without effort, his Army of Suffering. Into even the prosperous districts where, for miles upon either side of wide avenues, were small palaces in the midst of ample grounds, there came all through the day and far into the night the starving and homeless, asking shelter where uncounted great

rooms stood empty, yet being driven out under the pitiless sky; asking leave to warm their freezing bodies where the air was redolent of warmth and luxury, and being chased off again into the bitter wind and sleet; asking food,—what crumbs might fall from tables loaded with delicacies yielded up at great cost from the uttermost parts of the earth,—yet turned empty away because their very number became a weariness.

The sight of misery had made Beatrice dread the streets; but even from the windows it was not to be avoided. As she looked away from the mass of granite, vague gray amid the whirling snow, she saw upon the sidewalk, struggling along through the storm, a woman with a baby in her arms, and a tiny girl clinging to her fingers. The woman was looking, with an anxiety cruel in its intensity, at the lower row of lace-hung windows. Then, lifting her eyes to the second story, she caught sight of Beatrice. And, in that look, Beatrice saw herself as she realized she must be seen from below,—the very vision of the spirit of wealth, as she stood, the light from a grate of coals behind her, draped in voluminous, creamy folds, holding back the curtains with either half-bared arm upraised. The mother stopped, and hesitating there, with a fearful glance around—a glance which told of the many times she must already have been set upon by indignant servants and bidden begone—she left the sidewalk and came upon the lawn. The snow through which she had to

make her way was deep. It came to the knees of the little girl. The shawl which covered the mother's shoulders and wrapped the baby was wet through. So, too, was her dress, and that of the child. One of her hands held the baby. The little girl, crying with the cold, clung tightly to the other. She might not reach out in supplication, and so she stood, in the simplicity of a misery which needed no gestures, her face upturned.

Evelyn Durran had, as Beatrice knew, a rooted objection to beggars, who were always troublesome to servants, and who were probably dishonest and worthless, else charity organizations would have given them succor. She was of those held in mind by he of Uz, who had himself known prosperity, and who prophesied that "in the thought of him that is at ease there is contempt for misfortune."

There was nothing to be done beyond wrapping a coin in a bit of paper and throwing it down with a kind word.

Having done this little, Beatrice left the window and went back into the sitting-room of the suite which had been put at her disposal.

She sat in front of the fire, and the by no means cheerful thoughts which came to her as she looked into the throbbing red of the coals were interrupted soon by a maid who brought the information that a young woman was at the basement door, asking to see Miss Tennant.

"Her name, I was to say, is Nettie Morton." The tone, though coldly respectful, made plain that annoyance and disapproval which Evelyn did not like to arouse. "Is she too wet and snow-covered to be brought through the house?" Beatrice inquired. The maid was reluctantly of the opinion that she was not, and Beatrice therefore directed that she should come upstairs.

Nettie, warming herself before the fire, looked around the room. "It's a grand house, ain't it?" she said admiringly; "grander than the one you had yourself." She stated her errand. She had come to say good-by. She and her husband were going away. Her husband, she explained, had a promise of a position as street-car motorman in New York. "He's been that onct before," she continued. "It ain't worth much,—the pay,—nothing like so good as he was earning here, but there don't look to be much chance of his getting back into the mills. And our money's about gone."

Nettie had come out from the orphan asylum the year before, and had promptly thereafter married one of the steel workers of a neighboring plant. It was not in every sense a good match, even for an orphan turned out upon the world to get her own living; for though the young fellow was willing and an excellent workman, he was unmistakably greatly undermined in health by a life not easy upon stronger constitutions than his own had ever been. There was, too, Beatrice had thought

she detected upon the only occasion that she had talked with him, a slight weakness of character. This, it seemed, made him perhaps the better loved by the independent Nettie, whose instinct for having some one to take care of was as well developed as during the childhood which had clung to the burden of the baby sister.

The years had not much changed Nettie's sharp and eager glance, nor indeed her whole appearance. She was the girl of the sidewalks and the tenement-house steps, grown older, but not less characteristic.

She went on now to speak of her two brothers, who were still in the orphanage, and whom she wished to commend to Miss Tennant's kindness. Her old defiance and dislike of the latter had been melted away by many benefits ; and though she could not put gratitude into words much better than of yore, she felt it sincerely and showed it in her behavior.

"I'm afraid it's going to be pretty hard on my husband — running the cars in this weather," she reverted, shaking a head about which hung wet wisps of black hair which had come out of the frizzes she had produced at much pains. The habitual wrinkles, which a worried childhood had put upon her forehead, deepened. "He ain't been so well sinct we've been having to do without," she said. "But I'm going to find work, too," she announced indomitably. "It's Neil's got this job for us in New York," — she volunteered the information presently — "and we thought we'd ought

to take it. He said that with the times so bad it was the best he could do just now." Then holding up one well-worn and slipshod boot to the fire and observing absently the much knotted strings which were gray with age, she asked, "You ain't never seen Neil since he got to be famous, did you?"

Beatrice, not stopping to define the exact nature of fame, answered that she had not seen Manning since before her father's death.

"He asks me about you pretty near every time I see him," Nettie went on, unconsciously disregarding the fact that it was invariably she who began the subject. "He remembers you." She turned upon Beatrice with one of her old, abrupt movements. "You remember *him*, don't you?" she said.

Beatrice had the inclination to laugh which Nettie's untamed manner always aroused in her. "Very well indeed," she answered.

Nettie's "There!" indicated that a point of dispute was settled in her favor. "I told him you would," she said. "I seen him yesterday and I asked him if he hadn't any word to send you, and he said you wouldn't remember him, probably. I knew you would. And anyway, you couldn't forget him with his name in the papers all the time." Nettie very evidently took pride in her distant relative.

The appearance on the threshold of a little figure in pale blue and much lace caused Nettie to rise and take

her departure, answering Beatrice's request that she should write, with a promise to do so.

"Where to will I write, though?" she bethought herself to ask.

In the instant of her hesitation her homelessness came to Beatrice with vividness. "Here — for the present," she answered.

As the door shut behind Nettie, Mrs. Durran asked, "Hadn't I better send one of the servants down with her?" Beatrice gave the assurance that Nettie would find her own way; and then, answering the real question which she knew had prompted the words, "I can vouch for her, Evelyn. She won't take anything."

CHAPTER XXIII

Few — none — find what they love or could have loved,
Though accident, blind contact, and the strong
Necessity of loving have removed
Antipathies — but to recur ere long
Envenomed with irrevocable wrong.

— *Childe Harold*.

THE stories of life are written with two inks — with the black of obvious facts, which all may read, and which gives the outline that will suffice for most, though much is left unexplained ; and with the invisible, which fills in the blanks and interstices and is only to be deciphered by those who can hold it to the fire of imagination and bring it out.

But the light of Beatrice Tennant's imagination had never been sufficient to enable her to arrive at a knowledge as to the causes which had led to the marriage of John Durran and Evelyn Woolmer. It was not to be accounted for upon the theory of Racine — that in extreme disorder of mind one may marry whom one hates and lose whom one loves. Durran had not been wrought up to any such pitch of recklessness by Beatrice's ultimate refusal to marry him, which had come to pass when she had returned to the city after a year

spent in France and Italy. He had not gone off in his desperation and taken Miss Woolmer upon the rebound. He had waited another full year before doing so, and he had never seen fit to vouchsafe to Beatrice the least hint whereby she might gather his motives. It was, and remained to all who knew Durran well, one of those matches which are inexplicable by any rule of action.

Though Durran had never been a man to disparage or speak slightingly of any woman, Beatrice had always known that he had the least possible opinion of Miss Woolmer's mental qualifications along any line. It had been his habit to avoid her whenever possible, as a young woman of so little interest to him that time spent in her presence was worse than wasted. If he had never scoffed at her personally, he had at any rate held up to ridicule most of the things which Miss Woolmer had in common with hundreds of other girls of her class.

Some had supposed that, having failed to get Tennant's money, he had married Woolmer's. But Beatrice did not for an instant credit that. Wealth was not the ultimate good to Durran. He was not especially ambitious to have great riches, and at the time of his marriage he had been already several times a millionaire, as well as — by an irony of that Fate which had been servile to Tennant during his lifetime — president of the company in Tennant's place.

Nor was Evelyn's prettiness of the sort which can turn a man heedless of all consequences, of anything but possessing it. It was sweet and attractive, but without the quality of bewitchment ; and therefore, by a process of elimination, Beatrice had only been able to conclude that Durran had made one of the very marriages against which he had once so strenuously warned her—that he had taken Evelyn for his wife because she loved him.

That she had always loved him, even in the days when his affections had been notoriously elsewhere directed, Beatrice had reason to believe ; and once the engagement had been announced, Evelyn had made no attempt to hide her absorbing, self-abnegating, worshipping devotion. She had had no thought, no speech, of anything save Durran, and had frankly said that to lose him would kill her. And though Durran's affection had been of no such exalted order, it had been sufficient to satisfy her, to make her happy. He had never, as a husband, given her any cause for complaint of his fidelity in thought or act ; yet there had been always one flaw in a contentment which else would have been absolute. She was jealous of the fact that he had once loved Beatrice Tennant ; that now, when he was with the latter, he seemed to have all manner of thoughts in common with her, which to Evelyn herself were incomprehensible. Though she had hugged the uncertainty as a comfort, and had, therefore, never

asked, she believed that Beatrice had refused her husband. But she had too really that sweetness of disposition which had always been ascribed to her, to allow herself to show any traces of the jealousy. She was deeply ashamed of it, and, by way of trying to conquer it, of punishing herself for it, she had taken every occasion to have Beatrice with her, to show her little kindnesses and attentions. She had even, within the last weeks, gone so far as to approach carefully the subject of her wish to make up to Beatrice, out of her own private fortune, something of that which Woolmer had been the cause of the latter's losing. Beatrice had, however, put a check to that advance.

She could not but feel a certain fondness for Evelyn Durran, although they had almost nothing in common; and as the little lady in sky-blue and lace took the chair which the dilapidated Nettie had just left, she stooped and kissed her upon one roseleaf cheek. Though Evelyn's years were nearly those of Miss Tennant, and though she was, moreover, the mother of three children, she might well have passed for a girl just leaving school.

She took Beatrice's hand and drew her down to the other chair, with a plea that she should talk over her plans now and tell what she meant to do. "You have been so busy of late,—what with your packing and everything,—I have not had the chance to really get you to myself; and John said that you had not confided any-

thing of importance to him. But then a man never knows what we think important," — she added her bit of philosophy.

What Beatrice had to say regarding her plans seemed to sum itself up much too briefly to satisfy Evelyn's distinctively feminine mind, with its love of minute detail. She intended to leave this city where living could not, in her opinion, be made pleasant for an unmarried, homeless woman of modest means, to go to New York and interest herself in some form of charity or settlement work. "I can only contribute my mite, now," she said without bitterness or manifested regret, "but I can do the more effective actual work, perhaps; and," she smiled, "a single woman should have something to occupy her mind."

"Beatrice," said Evelyn, in a tone inviting confession, and lifting her blue eyes coaxingly, "why don't you marry?"

"But nobody wants me," objected Beatrice. "I have not even money to recommend me any longer — in fact, I haven't had enough of that to be a great prize in some years."

Evelyn refused to entertain the idea that there was need of wealth to attract suitors to Beatrice. "Only, don't you wish now," she hazarded, "that you had kept all your fortune in your own hands, instead of having given such a large part of it away?"

"No," answered Beatrice, convincingly.

"Surely, though, it must be too tantalizing to think that there are millions of dollars which you have put in trust for charities, and have spent on all your pet schemes, and which you might have had yourself at this very minute if you hadn't been so generous." That the word was a civil synonym for foolish, Beatrice was aware. "John should never have let you do it," his wife added. Mild as it was, it was the strongest disapproval of her lord's actions that Beatrice had ever heard from her.

"John could not have helped himself. I was determined to do it. All I asked was his advice as to the best way—and his assistance in following it."

"And you don't regret it?" Evelyn insisted, unable to quite credit such a possibility.

Beatrice gave another unequivocal negative. She could not well say that it was better that part of her fortune should still be safe and where it could be devoted to good ends, than that it should have gone, with the rest of what she had reserved to herself, for lining the pockets of Woolmer and his colleagues.

Evelyn went back to the more romantic subject. "Isn't there any one who wants to marry you now?" she questioned.

Beatrice gave it as her best belief that there was not. She did not miss the implication that the proper refuge for her under present conditions would be to marry

anybody who might be able to properly support her, and who would take her.

"Dozens of people must have wanted you in the past?" queried Mrs. Durran. "Plenty wanted me, and I was never so lovely as you."

"If there is anything in a truly beautiful modesty, you must have been far more so," Beatrice told her indulgently.

Evelyn denied it emphatically. "Why didn't you marry the prince," she wanted to know, "instead of letting him go off and take one of his old Italian women?"

"She isn't old," corrected Beatrice, with wilful misunderstanding. "She is about his age, very charming and rich, I understand. As for why I didn't marry him — I didn't love him sufficiently."

"I heard," the other ventured, "that every time you have been on the continent you have had suitors — and titled ones, too."

Beatrice raised her curved eyebrows. "I was a rather presentable, unattached young woman, with what was doubtless reported as an enormous fortune in my own right."

Evelyn did not like the unromantic tone of the conversation. "Surely every one has not wanted you for your fortune," she reproved.

"No," agreed Beatrice, "I hope and think not."

"Is it that you have never been in love?" the inquisitor continued; and Beatrice admitted that she never

had. And then, with pulses fluttering at her own temerity, with fear of what might be the reply, Evelyn hazarded a question which she hoped might bring out the response that would end the jealousy biting at her heart. Had any one ever loved Beatrice herself as absolutely, as strongly, as it was her ideal to be loved?

A shadow of greater gravity than had yet shown itself came involuntarily over Beatrice's face as she looked into the glowing grate. "Yes," she answered, "there was one who, I believe, did."

The jealousy tore cruelly now at the heart under the blue silk and the billows of lace. If Beatrice had been observing, she would have seen the delicate face contracted with a spasm of pain at the unreasoned suspicion that this "one" must be her own husband, whose devotion to Miss Tennant had certainly been more apparent and persistent than that of any other man. "Who was he?" she made herself ask. The voice was hardly to be heard.

"You don't know him, and you would be astonished beyond all measure if I were to tell you," answered Beatrice.

Evelyn was somewhat reassured, and the reaction brought a flush of pleasure to her cheeks. So long as it was not John, it did not matter—beyond, of course, a legitimate sentimental interest in anything of the sort. She begged to be given at least a clew, but this Beatrice refused.

"Why did you not marry *him*, then?" Mrs. Durran persisted.

"You are bound to have me marry, though!" laughed Beatrice. "Well, for a number of reasons; among them that he was not in a position to marry me; and also that I did not care for him."

The latter cause was unsatisfactory, but Evelyn scented a more than usually delightful situation in that the "one" had been not in a position to marry Beatrice.

"Was he married already?" she wanted to know, ready to disapprove severely.

Beatrice said that he was not.

"Was he poor?"

"Comparatively," agreed the other, non-committally.

"Oh!" said Evelyn, believing that she understood enough for her purposes. "But then you didn't care for him anyway;" she derived comfort from it.

The subject was not, however, exhausted for her. Had this "one" lived here or elsewhere?

He had lived here, Beatrice answered.

Was he still here?

He was still here.

She was seriously puzzled as to who it might be. "Does he care for you still?"

"I don't know," said Beatrice; "but from his general character I think it quite probable."

Evelyn clasped her hands and leaned earnestly forward. "Do tell me *all* about it, dear, please!" she said.

"You wouldn't fancy the story at all," the latter put her off, smilingly, "and, moreover, we were to be at John's office before noon, and the time is passing."

CHAPTER XXIV

Bad governors help us—if they are only bad enough.—EMERSON.

“THE principle you are going on is all wrong.” Woolmer gave it as his opinion, stretching his heavy body back in his chair, his usual self-satisfaction seemingly in no wise disturbed by the fact that his position was that of a man on trial for fraud upon a scale so enormous as to almost remove it from the category of crime and place it in that high sphere of polity where are ranged in their majesty, above the mere level of morals, the acts of rulers and great statesmen. “It is all wrong,” he reiterated. “The only way to deal with that class is to fight them and down them. Every one of their leaders are irresponsible blatherskites, scoundrelly jawsmiths making their living out of the stupid poor fools that believe in them. And the rank and file are too ignorant to do anything with—except shoot them down if they get to breaking the laws. The only way you can let sense into their heads is through a bullet hole.”

Durran went on signing a pile of letters before him on the desk. He was not too well pleased to see his father-in-law, who had run over from New

York for the day upon matters connected with the investigation of his methods.

"When you fraternize with the union leaders," Woolmer continued, "you are in league with criminals who have no respect for the laws or the constitution. Not one of them but is a scamp, and every honest man who has the welfare of his country at heart ought to keep clear of them — not only that, he ought to fight them to the finish."

Durran's finger went to one of the dozen electric buttons beside his desk. A secretary answered the summons, and took off the sheaf of signed letters.

"What," demanded Woolmer, "is the use of an employers' federation all over the country, if one of its chief officers is going to take the stand you've been taking all along — is going to get up fool things like this one next week, this conference?"

"That is just the use of it," answered his son-in-law, serenely.

"What is your object anyway?" asked the older man, surveying him with shrewd suspicion in his staring, washed-out blue eyes.

"Well —" Durran took his time — "do you happen to remember how a great British statesman once enunciated the theory that it is sometimes necessary to make surrenders of what, if not surrendered, will be wrested from us? But apart from that — on lines of ethics rather than of policy — it seems to me to

be worth while for those in our position to try to advance civilization for a change, instead of continuing on with the method of frantic, outraged, insane denunciation and condemnation which has been the not very respect-inspiring attitude of the aristocracy and plutocracy these several thousand years. There was another British statesman who assured us, in one of the novels with which he diverted himself, that there is scarcely a less dignified entity than a patrician in a panic. But the least claim or move from the lower classes, the least hint of reform, has always managed to put your patrician in a panic where he gets beyond reason with his stampede. We ourselves, of course,"—he qualified it,—“don't exactly come under the head of patricians. Still, if it is true that ‘every aristocracy has been founded on power over the material resources of life,’ we are something like the modern substitute for the thing. And I think it presents attractions—the notion of inaugurating in our class a capacity for arguing with the labor class, and allowing ourselves to be argued with, instead of losing our heads with consternation and spluttering out invectives.”

“There's good reason to be scared; it's time we were,” Woolmer gave it as his opinion, “when the exorbitant demands of a swell-head labor, and the princely wages it's been insisting upon, is what has brought the country to the edge of ruin.”

Durran looked steadily at his father-in-law, but the very pale blue eyes did not waver.

"You make yourself an accomplice of men who have no respect for the flag or the government, when you parley with union bosses." Woolmer repeated a previous and a favorite assertion.

"There are methods of breaking the law quite as efficacious as, and probably more insidious than, splitting the skull of a blackleg." Durran could not resist another shaft. "As for disrespect for the constituted authorities and the flag, we have had examples of the first in the language which has been used by representatives of the moneyed interests to a chief executive who tried to still the troubled industrial waters. And as to the latter, there was an employers' association banquet not long since, where the toast-master is reported to have refused to toast the Stars and Stripes. I can hear the loud cries of anarchy and revolution if it had been a labor lodge occurrence," he added grimly.

An office boy opened the door and coming beside Durran's chair waited. Durran turned his head towards him. The boy held out a card. Durran glanced at it and laid it upon his desk. "I will see him as soon as I am disengaged," he said. And as the boy went out he touched the card with his forefinger. "It is Manning," he said.

Woolmer expressed himself with a snort, and made

a movement preparatory to rising. "Biggest cursed hypocrite of the lot," he passed judgment, "and just smart enough to fool the gullible part of the public by posing as a level-headed reformer with a love of law and order. More dangerous than any of his breed that gets found out and can be locked up where they belong, in the penitentiary. If the fellow has so damned much ability as they're always saying, what's the reason why he hasn't made his eternal fortune?"

"Money, you mean," answered Durran. "Is that the only test of ability?"

"Yes, it is," asserted Woolmer. "In this day and generation, anyway, it is. If your goods or your powers are any use, the world is going to pay you well for them."

Durran pursed up his lips. "Then the history of the future will be without a good many names that seem now to have a fair chance of a place on its pages," he said reflectively.

Woolmer lifted his bulk from the chair. "I'll go and give him his audience. If I stayed, I'd be tempted to kick him out."

"It would be the course of wisdom to resist temptation then," Durran counselled. "He is not submissive."

Woolmer got his hat and coat, then turned back to give his son-in-law a parting bit of advice. "Take the word of a man who is older than you are, and

who has made a success in life, John. Give up this thing of trying to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. Keep this federation of ours what it ought to be,—a combination to fight and bust up the unions. Don't try to mix yourself with conciliation. The employer has got his rights and it's ridiculous for him to be asking walking delegates what he can be allowed to do, letting the workman dictate what wages and terms he is going to work for. We want to make this national organization strong enough so that we can tell the laborer to take the terms we see fit to give him, or go to Sheol." He held out his hand and shook Durran's with the heartiness of encouragement. "Tell Evelyn I couldn't lunch with her anyway—got another engagement. But I'll be out this afternoon before I take the train back."

"Miss Tennant is staying with us," said Durran. It had the note of a suggestion.

"She is?" said Woolmer. "Why's that? Ain't she got a house of her own?"

As Durran had long known, Woolmer did not fancy Beatrice. "She has had to sell it. Her money has been practically all lost in this fall of stocks."

Woolmer was untouched. "That so?" he said indifferently. "That's what comes of her spending all she did for a set of people who'll never thank her for it and never profit by it. When women get fooling with organized charities and factory and labor

legislation and all kinds of wild economic schemes, they ought to be put under guardianship. If Miss Tennant had married like a sensible girl, and kept herself occupied with things that do for the female mind, children and parties and all that, her husband would have looked after her interests and she'd have been a rich woman to-day. She wanted to be emancipated and strong-minded, and she's gotten her deserts." His satisfaction in this suitable judgment of Providence was evident. "Tennant," he gave it as his verdict, "was usually a sensible man, but he made a mistake in setting the girl at a lot of charity work that turned her head. I never let Evelyn mix up with anything of the sort. She got a touch of the craze once,—caught it from Miss Tennant I guess. But I cured her of it in a hurry."

He repeated his message. "Tell the little girl I'll see her this afternoon." Woolmer, whose son was a ne'er-do-weel, a drunkard, and generally a disappointment, concentrated upon his daughter a good deal of pride and affection.

* * * * *

It had been principally through the influence of Manning with his own people, and through what had had to be the much more strenuous efforts of Durran with his, that there had been brought about the definite arrangements for the conference of delegates representing the two federations of employers and

of labor. These, during the following fortnight, were to be gathered together from the ends of the country, bringing with them full powers for arriving at any temporary or permanent arrangements tending toward peace and good understanding.

Manning and Durran had worked together to the end for close upon two years, and had necessarily seen much of one another. Since the conference was to begin upon the following Monday, there were still a number of final plans to be talked over, and directly Manning came into the office, they fell to the discussion. Their speech was such as wasted neither words nor time, the speech of men of multifarious concerns, — concise, definite, to the point. But there was much to be gone over, and they were still in the midst of discussion when the door of the office was opened and the buttoned sentinel, in obedience to orders previously given by Durran, stood aside to allow the entrance of two women.

Manning turned his head in their direction, in his look the abstraction of one who is thinking of something other than that which interrupts him. He was half absently aware of a small, slight figure in gray, and, following it, a taller one in tan and sables. Then his eyes met those of Beatrice Tennant.

He had risen to his feet. And he bowed in silent acknowledgment as Durran made known his wife — whose smile though sweet showed unmistakable uncer-

tainty as to the degree of cordiality to be shown to a labor leader. She turned aside, looking in some embarrassment for a chair which she might take.

Beatrice had moved forward, and now she put out a gloved hand, warm from the depths of the muff from which she had drawn it. Nothing could have been more natural than the friendliness of her reminder that she and Manning had known each other long ago. And the answer, in Manning's deep tones, that she was very good to remember him, was formal and commonplace enough. Yet, over the two faces the shadow of some shared memory passed and was gone. Durran, watching them, saw it.

Beatrice stood speaking to Manning, and Durran drawing out his watch looked at it. Then his glance consulted his wife. It was still early — could she and Beatrice wait while he and Manning finished their business?

Mrs. Durran agreed, and Beatrice, putting back the furs, on which lay the bright drops of melting snowflakes, sank into a big, red leather chair near the one that Manning had left and to which he now went back.

During the next twenty minutes — which seemed to her three times as long — Evelyn Durran heard talk of differentials, of minimum and living wage, of trade agreements, of injunctions, of limiting of apprentices and output, of arbitration, — all the nomenclature and phraseology of a world which made her own exist-

ence possible, which was its foundation, its supporting structure, yet in which she took no slightest interest, and of which she was hardly aware, nor desired to be. She watched Manning at first with some curiosity. She had heard her husband speak of him. But he was not what she would have expected to see had she ever given the matter thought. Except, she reflected, that he was certainly a more fine physical type than most of the men she knew, he was otherwise not noticeably different from them. There were, in fact, a number among her social acquaintances who would not have benefited by contrast ; but he was only, after all, a union leader,— president, or some such thing,—and therefore worse really than a mere workingman who minded his own business and did not go about meddling in that of his superiors.

To Beatrice it seemed that the time had changed him not a little,—a change which was, at least outwardly, one of unmixed improvement. His face, more lined, more thin, showed deeply the marks of thought and strain and work. His manner gave more than ever a sense of concentration, of force. And he looked older than she knew him to be. He might easily have been supposed more than five-and-thirty. She had known him too well in the past not to be very sure now that, though he did not look at her and was talking to Durran as if he had no concern but the subjects under discussion, the fact of her presence was beneath it all,

that of which he was most intensely conscious. In the first meeting of their glance as she had come into the office, she had seen that what she had been for him seven years before, she was to-day. Of his life following upon his departure from Staunton she knew only what Nettie had told her and what she had read — that he had continued to work in a steel plant until, being sent as delegate to a convention, he had been elected a union officer. That he had before long made himself the one possible man for the presidency of the union, and that since his election his position in the industrial world had become, almost at once, considerably more prominent than his mere official status implied. He had handled situations of immense importance to the entire country, and for the most part to the country's satisfaction. The weight of his words had thrown the scale in more than one conference, and he had dealt in person with a large number of the nation's leading men, in many walks of life. Its chief executive had summoned him in conference, and lesser dignitaries had found themselves requiring his advice. He had even been spoken of as a possibility for a place of importance in the government, during the next administration. The head of the company which not a decade before had turned him out of its employ as a trouble-breeder sat now giving close attention to what he had to say — for the most part concurring in it.

When Manning stood up to go, he walked to Durran's desk and leaned his arm upon the top of it, listening to some final comments of the latter. "I will be away for the remainder of the time between now and next Monday," he said, when Durran had finished. "I have got to go over to New York to testify against Mr. Woolmer and to attend to some other matters that have come up." He would, however, he added, be back by Sunday night, and if there should be anything about which Durran might wish to see him, he would be glad to be sent for.

He took his leave of Mrs. Durran, with merely another inclination of the head. And this time Evelyn barely answered it, and did not soften her rigidity with the slightest smile. Manning was not unconscious of her manner. It had been a part of his experience to have met with the same thing very frequently. He turned to Beatrice. "I and many of those for whom I am working feel that we have a great deal to thank you for, Miss Tennant," he told her gravely. "In my own opinion no money has ever been better spent than yours in the interests of the working classes."

Beatrice's look toward Durran drew him into the subject. It was he, she answered, who was chiefly responsible—who had been the head, if not the hand. Durran disclaimed more than a very limited responsibility.

When Manning had gone Evelyn turned to her husband, flushed and with angry tears in her blue eyes. She expressed indignantly a far from complimentary opinion of Manning. He had had no business to speak as he had done of her father in her own presence. "But, my dear little woman," objected Durran, inwardly rather inclined to find it amusing, "you must remember that there are spheres into which it does not penetrate that I was so fortunate as to have married Woolmer's daughter—and in which the information would not carry much weight if it did. You may be sure that Manning is totally unaware of the momentous fact." Even this much of gentle irony—which was quite lost upon Evelyn as such—was more than Beatrice had ever heard from him before. But Durran had been annoyed at the manner in which she had taken the introduction to Manning in the first place, and had not been able to avoid contrasting it with that of Beatrice Tennant.

From the height of her displeasure, and of a fashionable education which had left her proficient in no one practical or ornamental line, Evelyn spoke. "I suppose," she said, "it is the kind of thing one must expect if one descends to dealing with ignorant people like that."

CHAPTER XXV

Men are drawn together, not by ideas, but by interests.

—DE TOCQUEVILLE. *Democracy in America.*

DURING the days of Beatrice Tennant's visit, Evelyn had not found that, in bringing it about, she had reaped a reward in any lessening of the jealousy she had tried sincerely to force into subjection. More than ever before there had been made evident to her the lack of companionship between herself and her husband. He listened kindly to the small chatter which she tried so hard to make entertaining, the talk of the babies, of the novel she was reading, of their friends. She felt that he had no real pleasure in it all, and realized helplessly that the little abstract ideas she thought up and enunciated fell, in some way, weak and flat. She felt as might some unfortunate, feeble, or disabled dog, faithfully but fruitlessly making valiant attempts to follow the master that it loves. And though she did her best not to allow herself to be angry with Beatrice, she could not help a resentful thought that it was heedless and ungenerous of the latter to monopolize the conversation with John, and keep it nearly always

in what might nearly as well have been a foreign and incomprehensible tongue.

It was, too, heedless and ungenerous of her husband not to see that she was being left out in the cold, not to feel for her loneliness. She kept a brave front in their presence, but when she was alone she cried very bitterly. Then from her spirit's travail was born a resolve to spare no effort to bring herself, to force herself, to take an interest in at least some of these heavy, abstruse topics which were so incomprehensively absorbing to John and Beatrice. But how, in a dozen years, could she know even a little of all that they appeared to know—the history, the biography, the talk of art and literature, the philosophy? She opened a book which Beatrice and her husband had been speaking of the night before, and determinedly read several pages. Then she cried again because the long sentences had meant absolutely nothing to her. Most of the words she knew—but put together as they were they did not carry the slightest thought. Yet that which was too hard for her in books might become easier for her in speech. And she therefore announced to her husband that it was her intention to go to the conference.

His look of questioning astonishment hurt her. "But why should you do that, Evelyn?" he asked.

Was it so unnatural for her to take an interest in that which was of interest to him? she countered. She

was not, after all, a child. He was too appreciative of the motive to gratify his inclination to smile. "If Beatrice can go, why should not I?" she asked plaintively.

He humored her with the assurance that she might.

And upon the Monday morning, shortly before ten o'clock, he met her and Beatrice as they stepped from the carriage in front of the building in which the conference was to be held.

It was a structure, one floor of which was devoted to the rooms of the Board of Trade, and to a large assembly hall.

As they left the elevator, Durran bade them wait for him. He went into the hall and came back with the information that there would be some minutes yet before the conference would be called to order, and that he could take them to their seats in the gallery.

"Are they reserved for us?" asked Evelyn, who was accustomed to privilege.

He shook his head. None of them were reserved.

Evelyn showed that she was doubtful as to her approval of this, but she followed up the stairs to the balcony. A number of men were already there, but very few women. Durran got them seats in the first row, then sat down beside them and fell to pointing out, as they came into the hall below, different men whose names were prominent in the world of industry.

"That fellow there, by the end of the third row —

the one with the gorilla-like length of arm and the big, pallid features," he indicated, "he is Lockhart."

Beatrice knew him to be a high official of the union.

"He is the biggest blackmailing, bribe-taking scoundrel out of jail, in my opinion," Durran went on to recount. "And he leads a cabal that works against Manning and his intentions by any methods that it thinks can be made efficacious to harm him or them. Victory isn't by any means always to the most honest in the short run, and in my opinion they are likely to succeed in downing Manning before long. Lockhart has a large following upon his own part. There is as big a percentage of laboring men who have an affinity for the scamp leader, as there is of voters who favor the rascally politician. It is quite possible, from what I gather, that Manning may be defeated at the next election and Lockhart get the presidency. And there is ground for suspicion that there are represented in this hall, at the present moment, employers who are furnishing Lockhart funds for his work against Manning — ones who would like nothing better than to see a formidable and unimpeachable fellow like the latter go under for a mighty bad representative of the cause like Lockhart."

Presently, as usual, he was talking to Beatrice, and forgetting even to include Evelyn in the sharing of his thoughts, though she was bending toward him and listening valiantly to what he had to say.

“There are a good many who are down upon Manning on general principles,” he told Beatrice. “Some one only this morning was talking to me in one of the offices here, and he called him a Jack Cade who promised ‘seven halfpenny loaves for a penny and all the realm in common.’ But in point of fact, he is quite sane, and as impartial as one could expect. The absolutely impartial man never yet furthered his cause very greatly, I fancy. There are some few matters upon which we don’t agree — open shop and incorporation, for instance. Manning won’t compromise upon the open shop if he can help himself — holds that it is impossible to the unions from a business standpoint — that they can’t keep agreements and discipline properly in open shops. Probably there is something in it, but we can’t be expected to give in if we can avoid doing so. As for incorporation — he makes out a pretty good case for it, that it is absolutely unsafe for them, at the present anyway. So long as you can point to our penitentiaries as containing thousands of poor men and practically never a rich one (and it’s no argument for the superior virtue of the plutocracy, either) — so long as that is the case, so long as money interests can defeat an excellent thing like the eight-hour law in Congress — just for that length of time unions have a good deal of justification in refusing to incorporate.”

His eyes were looking over the hall, and as the

swinging doors at the end opened and admitted two men, he pointed out one of them.

"That is the president of the labor federation," he told them. "He ranks Manning officially, of course — but he is not, in fact, the force that the latter is."

He reverted to the question of Manning's views. "I believe he intends to take as strong a stand as the occasion will warrant against limitation of output. He means to take it for his text that, as wealth is not the possession of coin but of goods, without restriction of output upon either side, the coin value of the individual might and doubtless would lessen, but actual wealth would increase. The theory is not new, of course, but *bona fide* action upon it would be."

He left the seat beside them and stood with his hand upon the rail. "You are to take this conference seriously, both of you," he admonished, smiling. "It may seem a small gathering of commonplace men; but in reality it is significant of one of the greatest changes in the face of history. That it has become possible for the laborer and the employer to meet on such terms as this," his hand swept over the floor below, "is the one new thing under the sun, the one thing which distinguishes this age from any other since the days when the gates of Eden were shut against the toiler."

As he turned away he looked affectionately down

at his wife, whose eyes were upturned, fond and adoring, to his face. "I am afraid you are going to find the time dull and heavy, little person," he said, without the least suspicion of the hurt he was giving.

Yet the words were prophetic, for it seemed to Evelyn that the two hours until noon were the longest she had ever spent. For all her firm resolve she could not keep her attention upon the proceedings and speeches. Her eyes wandered to the figures of the women in the balcony. There were more of them now than there had been at first—and some whom she knew, which was comforting to what had before been an uneasy sense that she was running the risk of making herself appear odd and peculiar in the eyes of her friends. She called Beatrice's attention to a woman who was also in the first row of seats, but a little distance away from themselves. "Her face is so coarse—though it looks as if she might have been very handsome once, does it not?" she asked. "And isn't that dark red hair the most magnificent thing you ever saw?"

Beatrice recognized her for the woman whom she had met once in Lester's office, and who had manifested an intentional insolence. "It is a Mrs. Kemble," she told Evelyn. "She was the wife of a workman who used to be at Staunton."

After the Kembles had gone away from the town,

Lester had heard of them several times, and had told Beatrice of them. Kemble, it seemed, had been the victim either of the black-list or of his age and bad health. Whichever it was, he had been unable to obtain employment in any mills upon any terms, and finally, driven from every thronged gate where he had sought employment, he had died where he had lain himself to rest upon the grass of a city park.

But long before that his wife had abandoned him. What had become of her, Beatrice had never before known. Evidently she had prospered, for she wore a good deal of showy jewellery and a dress which had probably been expensive. But her face had the traces of a hard life. While Manning spoke she watched him intently. Beatrice recalled what Lester had told her of his speculations as to Mrs. Kemble's sentiments toward the young steel worker.

When the conference adjourned at the noon hour, Beatrice and Evelyn made their way with the others down from the balcony to the main floor. Durran met them with the request that they should wait for him a few minutes. He would take them into the directors' room of the Board of Trade offices, and come back for them.

The directors' room was large and comfortably furnished. There were a number of others waiting—among them two women and several men whom both

Evelyn Durran and Beatrice knew. They gathered together in one corner. But before long Beatrice moved away alone, in order to look at a framed drawing upon the wall, an architect's sketch of a library which Woolmer was to give to the city. It hung just beside the door which led into the corridor, and as Beatrice stood in front of it, the knob was turned and some one came in. She raised her eyes to see who it might be, and found herself face to face with Manning. He made as if to stop, but at the same instant and by the same involuntary motion, she drew a little aside that he might pass.

Evidently taking it as an indication that she wished him to do so at once, he merely answered her good morning and would have gone on. With an impulse which she had no time to reason, which she only felt as a desire to keep him for a moment, and not to have him feel a slight she had by no means meant, she spoke to him—a comment on the proceedings of the morning, and one which it seemed to her, as she made it, was too trivial to be worth the making. He turned to her, answering, and they stood together talking of the conference and its prospects. Yet, though she questioned and replied and gave opinions not unintelligently, she was in reality thinking less of the conference than of himself—of having some opportunity to talk with him about things more personal than the speeches of captains of industry.

There was much which she wanted to know of his life in the past seven years, which she wanted to know from him, and not from Lester or Durran or Nettie Morton. And the chance might never offer again. If it were to be improved now, it would have to be she who should make the first step. He himself would not do it.

Not far from where they stood, and on the farther side of the long and narrow room, two unoccupied chairs were drawn near together. Beatrice glanced toward them. But she hesitated. Then, annoyed with herself for a diffidence, a self-consciousness as to her motives so entirely unlike her usual simplicity of thought and action, she made herself meet the penetrating and steady look before which she seemed to let her eyes sink in spite of herself. "If you have the time to spare for it," she said to him, "I should like very much to have you tell me a little of what you have done since I saw you last." She knew that the reference brought a deep blush over her face, and that he was seeing it.

He had come with the purpose of finding and speaking to a man who was now standing at the farther end of the long table used for directors' meetings. But he went with Beatrice.

Evelyn Durran's words stopped in the midst of a sentence as she saw Beatrice Tennant leading the way to where two chairs were drawn up side by side, and

sitting there, fall into earnest conversation with a man who had been a mill worker and was now a labor leader. One of the millionaire employers in Evelyn's own group had been a mill worker also,—but his present was such as to have effaced the stigma so completely that she forgot it.

So real was her disapproval of what Beatrice had done, that when they were at home again, and alone together, she undertook to remonstrate with the latter. "After all, dear," she said, "I am a married woman, you know, and so naturally I can judge better than you of a good many things. And it doesn't look well for you to be seen talking to the man who was accused of having killed your father. Probably," she went on, as one determined to be not only fair, but magnanimous, divesting herself of anything that might be held as unjustifiable class prejudice,—“probably he is a very good, honest sort of man, in spite of his rudeness about papa. But still, there is no escaping the fact that he is really about the same as a common workingman—and you can't treat that kind of person as an equal.”

Beatrice let pass unchallenged the superiority of judgment inherent in and resulting from the marital condition. Evelyn was wont to observe that no woman was able to understand the meaning of life and the world who had not seen them through the eyes of a husband and the souls of her children. Lacking these media of vision, these intensifying, broadening, and en-

lightening lenses of the intelligence, she resigned herself to accept as best she might the spinster's limited outlook upon even questions seemingly remote from marriage and child-bearing.

"But Neil Manning did not kill my father, Evelyn," she reminded, more than a little severely.

"Still," Evelyn insisted, "he was accused of it, you must admit." She clearly had hold of a point she did not mean to relinquish or be induced to give up. Beatrice had tried to deal with her under similar conditions before, and she had learned enough wisdom to abandon it now.

She took up the last implication. "Wherein is he not my equal?" she asked.

Mrs. Durran studied her in perplexity. There are some things the very obviousness of which makes explanation of them all but impossible. And that Beatrice should ask explanation of this one argued either that she was becoming a little less than sane, or that she was trying to tease. Mrs. Durran preferred to put the latter interpretation upon it. "It is hardly fair to make fun of me when I am trying to tell you things for your own sake, Beatrice," she reproached.

Beatrice denied that she was doing so. "I am in earnest, though," she insisted. "I should like to know some really valid reason for thinking myself superior to him."

"But your social position—" protested Mrs. Durran, almost hopelessly.

"What is it based on?" she asked. "Not birth, very certainly. Money? That is a vulgar sort of test, it seems to me. And besides, I fancy I am rather inclined to take Goethe's view of such things as claims to superiority upon the grounds of money I didn't even make for myself—and couldn't. And still, besides," she smiled, "I haven't any money, not as much as he has, I dare say."

"Your education—" said Evelyn. She believed that at any rate education was a thing which Beatrice held in too much respect to treat with levity and indifference.

"I'm afraid it wouldn't compare favorably with his in either depth or extent," was the answer.

"Oh! very well," Evelyn took it with a slight show of losing her sweet temper, "but—should you like to invite him as a guest to your table?" Her accent was that of triumph at a clinching proof of the validity of her position.

"As far as I am concerned," replied Beatrice, "far rather than a half-dozen I could name who are honored at our boards. Do you think he eats with his knife and drinks his coffee from his saucer? He does not, I give you my word."

Evelyn flushed hotly. She was not at all certain that Beatrice might not know of and be hinting at certain practices to which Woolmer, even yet, in the

privacy of his home, reverted sometimes in moments of relaxation from the strain of the acquired.

"I am sure I neither know nor care how he conducts himself in those respects," she said, with dignity. "But I do wish that, for your own sake, you would not let your theories take you so far. It is all very well to *think* as independently and oddly as one pleases, but it doesn't do to be considered unusual. Really, Beatrice, I assure you that it doesn't."

Beatrice wondered if it were as a corrective to her dangerously unconventional tendencies that, late in the afternoon, Evelyn proposed driving to have tea with a young married woman, the wife of a tin-mill owner, who was one of Mrs. Durran's most intimate and admired friends, and who might be counted upon to behave always with entire regard for the opinions of that which represented to her the world. Beatrice acquiesced to the proposal, not through any prospect of pleasure in the visit, but in order to gratify Evelyn.

It was nearing twilight by the time the carriage came to the door. And while they were still sitting by the tea-table in the reception room, the early winter night had already fallen. Beatrice, her mind wandering from the topic which was engrossing Evelyn and the hostess, hearing a step in the hall, turned her head in the direction. The hall was dark as yet, but the lights from the reception room fell in a wide bar across it, and as she looked about she saw a man pass quickly by the door.

She gave an inward start of amazement. In the instant she had recognized the gaunt face and long-armed figure of the man whom Durran had that morning pointed out to her as Lockhart.

A few moments later the master of the house came from the library, and joined them at their tea.

CHAPTER XXVI

An habitation giddy and unsure hath he that buildeth on the vulgar heart. — *Henry IV.*

“Do you really mean to go back to that conference again?” Evelyn Durran asked of Beatrice, a little querulously, toward the end of the evening. Beatrice, mindful of a guest’s duties, but sincerely hoping that her hostess had no little plans of her own, answered that it was her intention to go again the next day, provided always that Evelyn had no other arrangements to suggest.

“No — there is nothing,” Evelyn admitted, “but I can’t see why you try to make yourself like that kind of thing. I certainly am not going to. I can’t sit through another morning of it.”

She was aware that she was fretful. The difficulties of her situation made her so. It was getting to be almost more than she could bear without an outburst, that her husband and Beatrice should have so little feeling for her, that Beatrice should persistently keep on making herself more companionable to John than it was possible for herself to be. She tried bravely not to let the jealousy turn her against the Beatrice upon whom she had once expended the abandonment of a

girl's admiration; but it must, after all, be to a great extent an affectation on the latter's part to pretend to an understanding of, a liking for, such questions as the conference had handled that morning. Where was the use of a woman's playing at caring for that sort of thing? It was unfeminine—and it led one into doing emancipated and unbecoming things, such as Beatrice had been guilty of in talking to a labor leader.

Evelyn had been on the verge of tears all day that her resolution to bring herself to an interest in her husband's interests had been overstrained at the conference. She simply could not again sit through such another two hours.

"You will have to go alone, will you not?" she queried. "John can't take you. He has to be at his office until eleven o'clock."

"I suppose I shall," answered Beatrice, as a matter of course.

"I should think you wouldn't like to go about to such places by yourself."

Beatrice smiled. "I can't remember that I ever objected very seriously; but if I had I should have been forced either to do that or relapse into retirement."

"Well, if you want to go, I suppose you will," said Evelyn, with resignation. "You always seem so gentle and womanly, but when you want to do anything you do it, and without caring in the least what

people think. I don't believe that ever really influences you at all — that you ever consider it."

"I consider it," admitted Beatrice, "but I don't believe myself that it ever determines my final actions."

Evelyn felt annoyed, and felt too that she was petty in being annoyed. As a consequence she was not only dissatisfied with Beatrice, but with herself; and she could not help giving her humor a little vent by a last admonition, a Parthian shaft. "In any case, dear, please promise to let it influence you just enough to keep you from talking to that man again in the way you did this morning."

To her surprise the color rose warmly in Beatrice's face, — a thing she had almost never seen happen. She was frightened at once. Beatrice's anger was a thing she had never known and did not wish to know.

"Evelyn," said the latter, with determination in her low voice, "I will promise nothing at all, and will have to guide my conduct by my own judgment now, as I have done in the past; but if you feel that I am throwing discredit upon you while I am your guest, perhaps it would be better for me to save you that by going away."

The result was immediately the tears which Evelyn had been trying all day to keep back, and which came now, mingled with sobbing protestations that Beatrice was not to go away, that if she did, she herself would never be happy again.

And the next morning as Beatrice, having refused the offer of a carriage, walked toward the business district through a light snow-storm, she went with the resolution to manage in some way to see Neil Manning before she should return, even should it prove necessary for her to conspicuously make the opportunity.

This, however, it turned out not to be needful for her to do. She looked into the convention hall, and seeing that it was almost empty as yet, and that Manning was not there, she went back into the corridor and stood waiting. Though she was, as she had told Evelyn, very thoroughly accustomed to acting not only upon her own initiative, but alone, and though she was not wont to trouble herself as to the construction that others might put upon her acts, she felt herself much less indifferently confident than usual, and was conscious of wishing not to be noticed. This step which she was taking something very like covertly, had no thoroughly good excuse which she could give even to herself. She might almost as well have told Durran of what she had seen at the Steevens's house the evening before. Durran would have passed on the information to Manning. Yet she gave herself a not perfectly satisfactory explanation for not having taken that course. Durran might speak of it to Evelyn, and she herself would be put in the not very pleasant position of betraying her hostess's friends.

A number of delegates passed back and forth ; some

glanced at her, others did not seem to be aware of her presence, the browns of her suit and furs melting into the woodwork and shadows of the half-lighted corridor and rendering her inconspicuous. And there was, besides, in reality nothing odd or curious in the figure of a woman who stood waiting for some one. Several men and women whom she knew stopped and spoke to her. It seemed to her that she was barely civil to them in her anxiety to have them leave her alone, in her fear lest Manning should come, and go by without giving her the chance to stop him and speak to him. The event favored her, though. Not only was she alone when he did come, but he too was alone. He stepped out of the elevator. Its door clicked shut, and it slid on up the shaft. Evidently unconscious of any one in the hall, he stopped to unbutton his great coat, throw it open, and, with a vigorous movement, shake off the snowflakes that had settled on it.

Beatrice went up to him.

When he turned and found her beside him, he was taken too unprepared to keep his eyes from looking down into hers with an expression there was no mistaking, — a quick, almost uncontrollable desire to close her in his arms and hold her to him ; but he mastered himself instantly, with an effort of will that made him more stern and rigid than ever.

With no excuse for doing so, and with little preface, she told him of having seen Lockhart at Steevens's

house the evening before. If he wondered at her having come to him with this, he did not let her see it. He thanked her, telling her that the information would probably be of much use to him, and he walked with her to the foot of the gallery stairs. She went up them, and he himself kept on into the hall where he fell into conversation with the president of the labor federation. The while he talked he kept his eye on Lockhart, who was in one of the seats and was from time to time jotting down notes upon a piece of paper.

The hall filled, the chairman took his place, and the proceedings opened. Manning had gone to a seat,—not, however, the one he had occupied upon the day before, but the one next to Lockhart. The latter apparently did not relish the proximity, and craning his thin neck looked about once or twice as if with a view to moving, could the opportunity be made. Now and then he turned his back partially toward Manning and made another note. He had just done this, when, under cover of some prolonged applause at a point in an address which was pleasing the conference, Manning touched him on the arm.

“Are those your notes for something you are planning to say, Lockhart?” he asked. He knew that it was the latter’s custom to use copious notes for the most scant expression of ideas.

“Yes,” answered Lockhart, curtly.

Manning held out his hand. "Will you let me see them?" he said. It was put as a question, but it held none the less an accent of command.

"No," retorted Lockhart, looking him over in angry amazement at what was certainly a cool request.

The applause had subsided, and Manning had, to all appearances, taken the rebuff. When there was another round of cheering, however, he spoke to Lockhart again. "Did Steevens give you any suggestions as to those," — he indicated the rolled paper in Lockhart's enormous, bony hand, — "when you were at his house yesterday afternoon?"

All the effect he could have wished to produce, he obtained. Lockhart's face was a study in mingled dismay, surprise, wrath, and the desire to know how Manning had become possessed of the knowledge, which would, if circulated, be his own complete undoing. To have it known that he was going in and out of this particular rich man's house, under cover of nightfall, would be to stand practically convicted of bribe-taking.

"Will you let me see the notes?" repeated Manning, much more suavely than before.

The notes were handed over with the worst possible grace. Manning took them and glanced them through as he listened to the argument which was going on upon the floor. His expression betrayed nothing whatever, unless it were, perhaps, a good deal of interest in

the argument for the most part, and a very casual one in the piece of paper upon which his eyes only occasionally fell.

The notes were so brief and fragmentary as to have been practically unintelligible to any one not aided in reading them by outside knowledge and shrewd suspicion. As it was, Manning guessed their purport at once. It had been planned that Lockhart was to speak, and that in such a way as to insult and antagonize the representatives of capital too bitterly for it to be possible thereafter to reach any amicable agreement with them. Manning saw farther into the results of such a course. Open abuse of the employers to their faces would tend to solidify Lockhart's popularity with the turbulent and trouble-seeking element which he led; and too many of the delegates of the employers had come unwillingly, under compulsion of public opinion, not to catch at any chance for refusing to treat. The idea was a good one, and had only to be properly carried out to meet with a large measure of success.

"When did you and Steevens cook this up, and when are you to speak?" asked Manning, his voice dropped, but reaching the ear for which it was intended. Lockhart gave no evidence of hearing. "This morning?" There was again no answer. Manning touched the arm beside him again, and Lockhart looked around with a jerk of his head and an angry scowl. "Here is your paper." Manning returned it to him. "But I

wouldn't use any of those notes if I were you." It was pregnant with threats unsaid.

"Were you in Steevens's house yourself?" spit out Lockhart, whose temper, as of old, led him into mistakes.

"No," said Manning, calmly. "I wasn't in Steevens's house."

It was not many minutes afterwards that Steevens himself had the floor. He spoke for half an hour. Neither his manner nor his words were conciliatory. In effect he demanded what was to be the use or outcome of this Utopian conference which was taking the time of busy men, and bringing them long distances.

Manning, his arm thrown over the back of his seat, watched the speaker and gave close attention. It was a speech so turned as to have well provoked an unamiable retort from any man in the labor ranks which were being slurred. That Steevens — whose hardly secret wish it was to have the conference a flat failure — had intended his words to be Lockhart's cue, bringing him to his feet in an angry arraignment of the employer, Manning had no slightest doubt. Still less had he any, when Steevens, sitting down again, refrained through some long seconds from looking toward Lockhart; then, unable to longer resist, threw a glance of inquiry in his direction.

Manning, from eyes which appeared unnoting, saw the glance. So, too, it seemed, did Lockhart, for he

rose hesitatingly to his feet, and claimed the attention of the chairman.

"Don't use those notes," said Manning, quietly, without outward sign. And Lockhart obeyed.

The result was a pointless and vapid wandering, which, to a vision assisted as was Manning's, clearly produced the most infuriated and indignant disappointment upon the part of the betrayed tin manufacturer.

Lockhart sat down. Manning slowly took his arm from over the back of his seat and stood to his full height. He did not look upward to the gallery where Beatrice sat. He had forgotten at this moment that she was there, that she would be listening. The time for which he had wished had come. The thing which, to him, was above all others important to be said, he meant to say now. The force of personality, which was embodied in the dark face and the figure with its powerful, forward-bending shoulders, was sufficient in itself to bring attention to him. The direct, restrained language, with no superfluous verbiage, the deep, carrying, distinct voice, held it. He had no rhetorical exaggeration. If—speaking plainly and to the purpose—he could have been said to follow in any school, it was rather that of the "trained and illumined peasant" of revolutionary France, who kept in his phraseology the ability, the strength, of natural metaphor, which are the heritage of direct contact with toil and hard facts. But he was entirely unaware of

any model or precedent. He had never concerned himself with the manner in which he should express his opinions. "If you need words, you will have them. If your thoughts are worth anything, they can no more help taking shape in the right words than a billet can help taking proper shape between the rolls," he had once briefly dismissed the matter when an aspirant for oratorical honors had sought his views. His was apt to be that attitude of the gifted few,—so disheartening to the ungifted, but yearning and aspiring many,—which can honestly offer no encouragement as to how human endeavor is to set about attaining the verisimilitude of the bestowed power.

And now, without any of that self-consciousness as to methods which usually paralyzes achievement, he spoke his mind to the men who had faced around in their seats to give him their attention.

In reply to the sceptical and antagonistic question of the tin-mill owner, who saw nothing that could come of altering those customs, those industrial regulations eminently satisfactory to the surviving fit, and sanctioned and made venerable by all the ages, he outlined broadly the situation as he saw it now. Wide-spreading, almost complete, organization upon the parts of both capital and labor, interests at violent opposition, which the broadest minds among modern thinkers saw to be identical in fact and not merely in soothing euphuisms,—millions drawn up upon either side, conscious, articu-

late, organized millions of a dangerously high average intelligence, each upon the aggressive, each upon the defensive. There needed only the most superficial knowledge of the world's history to foresee that if these methods continued, in the course of a time which could not be long as history reckons, there was but one outcome — a class war either of physical force or the ballot such as the world had never yet seen, such as should break up society and recast it in some other mould, — a mould safely to be predicted more democratic yet, since the trend of events was recognized by the competent historian to be ever more and more toward democracy.

But these methods could not continue, if the natural course of democratic development were allowed to have its way, not held in check by the up-piling and jamming of blocks and fragments of the ice from a passing season of frozen conservatism. Give the stream of progress its way and no harm would result. But keep it back, and the damage would in the end change the face of the land. And was not the way taken by progress away from the savagery of conflict? Already the nations were, among themselves, so quickly turning to methods of civilization and intelligence, to the arbitration of disputes, that another hundred years would probably see the warfare which had torn the world from the beginning, a strange, dreadful, and almost incredible memory.

The arbitration of the nations had come about when

armament had reached the utmost point of destructive possibility. Capital and labor were coming to, if indeed they were not already at, a similar point of organization. It was time that they should follow the spirit of the age and take the next step forward.

And apart from the ethical view of the future — if, as was taught by the advanced economist, there was in moral forces a strength and value constantly underrated — from the mere utilitarian standpoint, was it not bad business to allow the vast waste of strength and value which lay in these wranglings and struggles between the wage-payer and the wage-earner? It was useless, and it was unnecessary.

The spirit of the government, as such, was against centralization and paternalism, and therefore the scheme of compulsory arbitration had never been able to make way here, as elsewhere. Nor had appointed, disinterested arbitration committees proved a signal success. But was not a voluntary, individual agreement for arbitration which should be compulsory, to be made possible? It would have to be attempted systematically over a given term of years, upon a large and respect-inspiring scale. Under the industrial conditions as they were, no merely local, isolated discussions and settlements could avail. The stage reached was beyond that.

And then, briefly, he proposed the attempting of an arbitration board, composed of permanent, well-paid

members, representatives of both sides, and of a hitherto sadly neglected public. The salaries would have to be sufficient to obtain worth, and to suit the importance of the position, and the tenure of that position long enough to give the office dignity. If submission of disputes were to be made obligatory upon all members of either federation, practically too few employers or workingmen remained unfederated, to be able to seriously disturb the peace of the country.

“And the man,” he finished, “who is not willing to subordinate what may seem his personal interests, to the interests of his country, of the world as a whole,—that man is unworthy the protection, the benefits, which the country gives him—is morally an outlaw of the world.”

He stood for a minute after he had ceased to speak. Then, as there began a dubious applause, confined at first to no more than half the room, but gradually increasing to some volume and accent, he resumed his seat.

CHAPTER XXVII

The anger of a woman is the greatest evil with which one can threaten his enemies. — CHILLON.

THE ostensible means of Mrs. Kemble's support was the keeping of a house whereof she rented all of the rooms save two, which she retained for herself. These two were on the first floor, and one of them looked upon the street from a pair of high French windows, each with its own iron balcony too small to serve any purpose. The lower hallway of the house was dark, and thick with close and greasy odors, most distinguishable among which was that of the stale smoke from the Chinese perfume sticks which Mrs. Kemble frequently burned in her own apartments.

Lockhart rented no room in the house, but he had a latch-key to the common entrance. And he let himself in now, without bringing the negress from the basement. He tried Mrs. Kemble's door, and finding it locked, shook the knob, rattling it sharply. His humor was not so good that he could take a check amiably.

He did not, nevertheless, vent his exasperation when Mrs. Kemble let him in. He was wary about putting her in a temper. Indeed, it was rather that, than any other motive, which made him continue with her, rela-

tions which had long since become perfunctory and wearisome.

Mrs. Kemble was attired in a blue silk petticoat and a jacket of flimsy pink ribbon and much coarse lace. Both were dragged and untidy. And one of her large mules of quilted pink satin and fur had had part of the side burned away by too close proximity to the gas stove. The stove was burning now, attached to a jet in the middle of the room. There was no ventilation, and the air was exhausted and ill-smelling. It reeked too with a heavy perfume, which was shaken out in waves from Mrs. Kemble's person as she went back to the lounge upon which she had been lying, reading a magazine.

"What's the reason you ain't at the conference?" she asked, with an indifference which made it apparent that she was asking chiefly for the purpose of having something to say.

If their relations were become perfunctory upon Lockhart's side, they had never been otherwise upon her own, though at one period she had made greater effort to please.

He had been at the conference in the morning, he told her. "But there's no use anybody but Manning and the capitalists being around. They're running the whole show to suit themselves."

He went on to give expression to that which was evidently boiling within him. Even the president of

the labor federation, he stated, was cutting an insignificant figure by comparison with Manning. "He sees to it that nobody else gets a chance. The chairman's in with him, and the bosses likes to hear what he's got to say, because he says what he knows they'll like. I've been on hand with the committee on resolutions five days now, since the first of the week, and I've seen that it ain't no use to get up a resolution that ain't just about fixed to suit the employers. The whole business is a ridiculous show, run to please capital."

He got up and went to another chair. "Since he sprung that pet scheme of his about the permanent arbitration board, he's been pegging away at putting it through every hour of the day. He thinks it's going to settle everything. If he gets that, 'such a thing as a strike of any great importance could hardly happen.'" Lockhart recited it with an angry accent of mockery. "Great idea, ain't it? How long do you think it would be before capital had bought over the labor members and the public's representatives, and would get it all their own way?"

"Did you tell them so?" Mrs. Kemble asked. She was very slightly concerned by any of it, as a matter of fact, and she would have preferred to read her story magazine.

"No," he answered, "I didn't say so. What's the use? You could see they most of them favored it—most likely they paid him to talk it up. Somebody

else suggested it, though, and what Manning said was that if the salary was as good as an office of so much importance to the country ought to get, and if the right sort of men were chosen for it, the chances of bribery were small—and that the members of such a board would be open to investigation and trial and dismissal if they got caught at any sculduggery. Said there was no more reason why they should be venal than the members of any board or body. No,” he reiterated, “where’s the use of saying anything?”

He did not think it necessary to explain that he had also been in some doubt as to how an expression of his views upon the subject might in future effect certain capitalistic subsidies of which he was in receipt. His position between two masters was a difficult one. The proposed board was indifferent to him in itself, except in so far as it was the conception of the man whom, above all others, he hated and would have been glad to see in discredit rather than advancing steadily.

“You see — Manning will be one of that board, on a fat salary, and hobnobbing with the bosses,” he prophesied. “That’s what he’s working for.”

“Do you want to be?” asked Mrs. Kemble, not paying enough heed to all that he said to appreciate the significance of her words, nor to note the effect they had on Lockhart, who gave her a quick, searching look of suspicion before disclaiming, with strong language, any tendency toward that particular ambition.

She gave him a slow glance of contemptuous surprise at his vehemence, a bad light in the heavy-lidded eyes, from which went out, now, cross lines and circles of wrinkles.

“Well — all right —” she cut off his profanity. “Don’t get hot. I don’t care whether you want to or not.”

He was silenced for a short time. Then he came out again against Manning, and the importance he was arrogating to himself in the conference.

“You ought to see him standing around and chumming with the plug hats. Talks to them as if they was hand-in-glove for the same purposes — and I guess they are. Why, Monday, at noon, I went to look for him, and they told me he was in the directors’ room up there. I went in and found him, — room full of all the big swells from over the whole country — and Manning, by the Lord! sitting down in one corner, hobnobbing with old Tennant’s daughter, as though they’d been brought up together all their lives.”

Mrs. Kemble was interested at last. She did not betray the fact by any start, but she turned gradually over upon her side, resting on one elbow and facing him. She asked a question or two. Then she changed to a sitting posture, her bare elbows on her knees and her chin on her fists. “Do you know something?” she said. “Do you know he’s been in love with her since the time there was the strike at Staunton?”

The day had been when Lockhart would have jealously demanded to know how she had come by the information. Now he cared not a snap of his fingers about that. He put her through a cross-examination, and elicited all the facts she cared to let him have. It made no difference to her whether or not he knew that she had gone to Manning's room years before — so long as he should not know that Manning had sent her out again. He might draw such conclusions as he liked. What mattered to her was that she saw an opportunity for the revenge for which she had waited long, but which opened out before her now with immense possibilities.

Lockhart, upon his part, did not ask what was behind the visit to Manning's room. The question hardly occurred to him as necessary. Nor did he find any contradiction between the fact as he inferred it and a foolish, romantic love for an unobtainable woman.

He got the story from her twice over. Afterward he sat for a while, absently fingering the fob of his watch and looking out of the window to the ice-coated, ash-sprinkled sidewalk, where there was only an occasional passer, blown by a strong and freezing wind.

Presently he got up, with intention in his movement, and announced that he thought he would go back to the conference.

Mrs. Kemble, looking after him as he crossed the street and turned a corner, smiled, biting the tip of a thick forefinger meditatively. Then she returned to her story.

CHAPTER XXVIII

. . . the force of words,
Can do whate'er is done by conquering swords.

—EURIPIDES.

A man should be only partially before his time. . . . Successful propagandists have succeeded because the doctrine they bring into form is that which their listeners have for some time felt without being able to shape.—HARDY.

FROM the closing scenes of the conference, from a round of mutual congratulations upon a degree of success beyond that which any but the most sanguine had hoped for, and from the speeches of optimistic prophets of future universal concord, and a near industrial millennium, Manning came out into the cold and falling darkness of a late afternoon. Lockhart was with him, but their ways diverged as soon as they left the building. The latter had a meeting of workmen to address; Manning was on his way to his hotel. The one ran out from the sidewalk and jumped upon a crowded car, hanging at the edge of an overflowing platform. The other went along the badly lighted main thoroughfares, his head down, the collar of his thick greatcoat turned up above his ears, his hat pulled forward over his brows. He had, as he kept on his long stride ahead, anything

but the look of a man who has obtained a triumph and satisfied an ambition.

The wretched women whom the last months of hard times had driven to the streets, and to a shame which was not saving them from starvation, found his aspect forbidding and did not approach him. The ragged, shivering men, who were begging cringingly from any other passer-by whose appearance bespoke prosperity, also kept away from him. The children were not so timid. Fear drove them to any lengths of boldness—fear of yet another night of hunger, in alleys and barrels and doorways, of the deaths by freezing, which many of those like them had already died.

They pleaded for pennies. Manning gave them. Through the recent period of want he had kept one pocket of his coat supplied with very small change. But the pit of need was far too deep for such drops to be other than lost in it.

He turned into the entrance of the hotel where he had his room. Men who were standing about the lobby stopped him and asked for the last news from the finished conference. A knot of reporters were waiting for him, to get a private expression of his views. He satisfied them. He had trained himself to a diplomatic regard not only for the meaning of words, but, more important always, the constructions liable to be put upon them by others.

As soon as he was left to himself he quitted the lobby and went to his own room. He had kept on his coat downstairs. Now he took it off and threw it over a chair, laying his hat and gloves on top of it. He stood where he was, in the middle of the floor, and his eyes went slowly around the dreary sameness of the hotel apartment where there was no one to welcome him, no one waiting to whom it would import to know that he had now, in only his thirtieth year, reached the point toward which he had directed himself, attained the chief of the definite objects upon which his ambition and purpose had been set.

He shrugged his shoulders. "This is the time a man marries," he said aloud "—marries some one who may develop rather less responsiveness than an empty room."

He smiled more than a little bitterly, and walked away from the centre-table to stand upon a rug in front of his bookcase.

Scenes and parts of speeches from this last afternoon of the conference recurred to him. Then scenes and words from his walk back through the streets. He remembered sonorous, high-sounding sentences, which served as a sort of verbal telescope, looking through which one might see a millennium almost directly before one, almost here.

They had told of the great, rich, prosperous, and

free country of which it was the common good fortune of those present to be citizens, where the best conceivable form of government—beyond whose perfection no imaginable step was left—offered its benefits to all alike. He remembered the children who would be without shelter and food.

Was it possible that men whom the community looked upon as sound in sense and judgment actually believed that while so much inequality and misery still existed, while fifty per cent of the population were rated as “very poor,” the last word in governmental experiment had yet been said? As well hold, with certain of the sects, that all truth had been once and for all revealed to the Prophets, the Fathers, and the Councils, as that political verity had been discovered for all time, that no fallacies were to be disclosed, no new lights shed, no new wants met.

In the face of the incalculably enormous work of betterment which was yet to be effected, even in a steadily improving world, what did it amount to, after all, that which this conference had effected?

His was not one of those natures for which any coveted fruit is turned into a Sodom's apple of fibre and dust by the very fact of holding it. As a rule he knew what he wanted, and when he had tried for and obtained it, he found it satisfactory. But to the most definite and purposeful characters, there come moments of discouragement when, after long climbing

to some peak which, from below, has seemed one of the highest, they are enabled, by standing upon it, to get a fair view over vast seas of other mountains yet to be conquered, melting away into invisibility, piling higher and more high. Then the point which they have reached seems, after all, so low as to be little above the flat.

Manning had to-day reached such a point. And now it served him as one of those stopping-places of life from which we look back over the way we have come.

It had not been an easy way for him — though he had made it with a speed only possible in an age and land of young men.

For months after he had left Staunton he had found himself unable to get work at his trade. To give his name was to be questioned whether he were not that Manning who had led at Staunton. To answer that he was, had been to be refused a position of any sort. He had taken any odd jobs he could get, had worked in the streets as a day-laborer, on farms as a hand. He might, in all likelihood, have obtained some permanent clerical or commercial position, but there had come to him by then a good deal of that teeth-gritting stubbornness which the apparent opposition of Fortune rouses in men of strength, that determination to beat it, not by turning aside and evading, but by forcing it to stand off from the path they have

started upon and mean, more than ever, to keep to. He had won by finding at length a superintendent of liberal tendency who had been willing to allow him in his mills.

The plant had been an open one, running eight-hour shifts, and he had found time enough for the studying, experimenting, and writing, to keep up which, at Staunton, it had been necessary for him to live at far too hard pressure. He had also given much attention to the affairs of his lodge and of the union in general, deliberately aiming for prominence and leadership as he had long before let Lester understand that he intended to do. The work in the mills he had looked upon merely as a temporary expedient, a necessary stepping-stone to a position in the association.

Then he had been sent as delegate to a convention. Circumstances had favored him—sometimes forced by himself to do so—and he had been elected to an ill-paid official position in the union.

He had thereupon left the steel mills.

When, in course of time, he had been made the president, he had been the youngest to hold the office. His appearance had helped him in this as he had looked considerably more than his years. He had taken the position at a time when the great majority of employers and manufacturers in the country had been driven by many very real, and many fancied, union abuses, into a coalition to fight and break the

backbone of unionism, themselves, after the manner of all first reformers, as unreasoning, unjust, and short-sighted, in not a few of their contentions, as the unions had been.

There had of necessity resulted a quick swelling of the union ranks, a marked spread of sentiment for organization upon the part of men who heard their class reviled and saw it in danger of bitter persecution.

The situation had been eminently a fighting one, and it had appealed to the fighting instinct in Manning himself. But he had done his utmost to keep that down, or at least within the bounds of business and good sense. He had looked over the conditions as impartially as he could bring himself to it, searching for the broad general principles, and trying not to let himself be biassed one way or the other by the thousands of exasperating and enraging specific instances.

He saw that it was an age unlike any preceding one, in that not conquest, migration, religious disputation, romanticism, nor the fine arts represented its spirit — but industry. In it, therefore, the working-man, the toiler, held a place of infinitely greater importance than in any former time, since he was himself of infinitely greater importance to material civilization. Yet this very large factor in the problems of the day was almost totally neglected by the state, left to the mercy of mere personal interests and animosities. A policy upon precisely the same order as

that which at the beginning of the nineteenth century had caused statesmen to look upon their country's foreign relations as the matter of primary moment, placing last, and least to be considered, its internal condition,—a similar policy now dictated that all and any matters relating to labor conditions should generally take care of themselves and trust to chance. As the one understanding of government had had to be outgrown, so, too, in course of time, would this.

Napoleon, the most eminently practical of men, had said that without Rousseau—the theoretical, the dreamer of then unthinkable dreams—the French Revolution could never have been. It was the thinkers, the prophets, the believers in the seemingly impossible, whose influence and predictions, working slowly, unrealized, changed the face of states and societies. And most of the greatest of these in the modern world believed in and foretold a necessary change in the position of the wage-earning classes.

To Manning's mind it had seemed that those things for which the unions of the trades stood were the inevitable outcome of an industrial age, of republicanism, democracy, and public education. As such, they could not by any conceivable means be frustrated—though they might indeed be checked.

He saw a great body of men representing the money interests pursuing the usual course of such throughout all history,—a history which was but the long tale

of their gradual defeat,—improving and benefiting unquestionably, but, too, manipulating laws, grasping, amassing, displaying, taunting, and fulminating curses most heartily returned in kind, trying to subject absolutely to its will not only American labor, but, infinitely more inflammable foreign labor in process of Americanization. The flood-gates were open for a vast inrushing tide of the lowest type of races in every respect alien. In the course of a time which could not be long, as history reckons, there would inevitably come an actual and violent clash of most appalling consequences—unless, indeed, the opposing factions could be brought to adopt the methods of civilization and abandon that savagery, most and longest adherent always in the struggle for life and goods.

It was in this wise that he summed up the past, the present, and the future as regarded this question. And he had soon found others who thought with him, some even who were already going to work toward a solution of the problem. Among these latter had been Durran, who did not lack definite purpose and a telling force, but whose many other interests made it impossible for him to take up this one with undivided attention.

Eventually the two of them had come to an agreement, whereby Durran was to use his influence with the federation of which he was an officer, and Manning his with that of labor to bring about a conference

which might seek and experiment with a *modus vivendi* for the opposing bodies.

The conference, after close upon two years of preliminaries and overcoming of difficulties and prejudices, had been and passed.

It had appointed members of a permanent arbitration board, the possibilities of which were to be given a fair trial. Manning had been among those chosen. Durran had, with obvious justice, pleaded his other interests in his refusal to serve, but the representatives of all three classes were men with whom Manning believed it would be possible to work in concord.

The two weeks had not been without violent debates, angry recriminations, and strenuous rivalry.

Manning was tired after it, but still upon too much mental tension to be able to rest. He fell to walking back and forth, looking at the large red roses upon a yellow trellis which formed the pattern of the carpet.

Before the place on the board had been offered him, he had determined to accept it, in the event of its being so. He had taken all that it would mean into full consideration. He would, he knew, find it necessary to resign from his presidency, but the man who was next in order of succession would be capable in handling the duties of the office. The salary he would receive as a member of the board would be very considerably greater than his present one. But

he was not, in any case, under the absolute necessity of considering that. His means, apart from any salary, were sufficient to render him independent. He drew an income from several patents of machinery and processes. At any time within the last three years, he might have left the labor ranks and gone into better-paying positions. His executive ability was such as would have made his services desirable, and excellent business offers had been repeatedly made to him. In the politics of the city or the state he might have had almost anything that he wished. The mayoralty, the governorship, a seat in Congress, had all been proposed to him. But he had small faith in the possibility of greatly serving the cause of labor through politics, as yet. One absolutely necessary preliminary step to that was that labor should be brought to so conduct itself as to obtain the respect, if not the sympathy, of the people as a whole.

There had been many a time, nevertheless, when, angry, disgusted, dispirited, he had wondered if he might not, after all, be wrong in remaining here, when his natural course would have led him elsewhere. And since the day a fortnight before, when he had met Beatrice Tennant in Durran's office, he had not been able to keep it out of his mind that had he pursued a different course, he might, by now, have been in a position where he could have won her love and married her. It would have been right and

proper in the eyes of a reasonable, logical world, that she should have married an erstwhile mill-worker who had made money and gained prominence in either industry or politics.

Were he, at this moment, to enter the political field and meet with a success which he was almost assured, it would cause little or no disapproval for Beatrice to marry him, more especially as she was no longer now a very rich woman.

As it was—what the future held for him was to do to the end, as well as he could, this thing which he had undertaken. His best hope was to remain permanently upon the arbitration board, should it prove a successful experiment. If he were to have to leave that eventually, some other field of activity along the same line would doubtless present itself. It was a practical certainty that he would henceforth be a rather prominent and important man—and a lonely one.

He stopped in his restless walk, sat in the chair which was drawn up to the centre-table, and bending down his head rested it upon his folded arms.

CHAPTER XXIX

What if some little pain the passage have
That makes frail flesh to fear the bitter wave?
Is not short pain well borne that brings long ease
And lays the soul to sleep in quiet grave?

— *Faery Queene.*

NETTIE approached the hotel where Manning lived, and coming in front of the entrance, she hesitated. She knew that her clothes were shabby to the point of ragged, that floors of black and white marble in intricate octagons, such as she saw through the glass of the storm-door, were not for feet whose shoes were worn out and separating over stockings too old to take more darning. But she had to see Manning. It was Sunday and he would not be at his office. She must catch him here this morning, before he should go out. She brought to bear some of that courage for which all her life had called, and pushed back the double barrier of swinging doors.

A negro porter, who was scrubbing the marble with much splashing of dirty water, stopped work, leaned upon his long-handled mop, and watched her. Three bell-boys, sitting on a bench, nudged one another openly, grinned, and made audible comments. Though

it was not yet nine o'clock, there were a number of men about. These, however, hardly noticed her.

It was the clerk behind the counter, — a person with smooth brown hair, a curled, brown mustache, which bore the crimp of the iron, white hands, and a radiating odor of freshly applied bay rum, — who completed, for her, however, the realization of her temerity. Her experience had not been sufficient to give her even the poor comfort of knowing that hers was the common lot, when he stood at a distance and looked her over with a fine detached sort of disdain. He raised his eyebrows.

“Well?” he demanded.

Nettie answered, but he either did not hear, or preferred to have it seem so.

“See here — what do you want?” he put it to her.

He had some justification in the fact of having been constantly bothered, of late weeks, by beggar women who had come into the lobby.

Nettie repeated what she had said. She wished to see Mr. Manning.

The clerk looked her over again. “What do you want to see him about?” he asked her, with a comingling of impertinence and suspicion which, even in Nettie’s subdued and broken spirit, proved too much for the Irish in her temper.

“None of your business,” she flung back, her eyes

kindling. "You go tell him that I want to see him."

The clerk stared at her in wrath, divided between a desire to have her put out by the negro and a wholesome awe of Manning. The latter conquered, and he summoned one of the bell-boys by a sovereign nod of the head.

"Go find Mr. Manning—he's probably in at breakfast now—and tell him there's a beggar woman here wants to see him. What's your name?" he turned back to her sharply.

"Never you mind," said Nettie. "You let that boy tell him what you said—and see what happens afterwards."

The clerk thought better of it. He repeated his order to the waiting buttons, but in modified language.

Nettie went off to a chair in a corner and sat in it, looking dully at the mop and the brown water as they went over the marble. She did not see Manning until he stopped in front of her and spoke. She heard the familiar, deep voice speaking her name in plain surprise.

"What brings you back here?" he asked, as she stood up. "What has happened?"

"I don't want to talk to you here," she said, glancing around the lobby with a look which took in the men, the still grinning bell-boys, and the covertly

observant clerk. Was there not some other place to which they might go?

He led her to one of the public parlors, which they had to themselves.

"My husband's dead," she stated at once, when they had taken two chairs in a corner by a window. "He killed himself. He took the job on the cars after he'd had to wait a week, and they put him on the Brooklyn run the first day. He said he was in luck to get that. There was hundreds was trying for it, besides. But maybe you know what that run's like, out front where they won't give them no shelter. And it was a bad day, raining and freezing and blowing. That night he come back to the room we'd got in a rotten old tenement. We had a little coal and I tried to warm him up. He said he couldn't keep the job, that he was past being any good to me, and I'd better be alone than have a dying man out of work on my hands. He sent me out to a saloon on the corner to get him some whiskey." She stopped for a moment, and her fingers flapped a tassel on the chair arm nervously. "When I come back," she finished, "he'd shot himself — through the head."

She had been looking away from Manning, straight in front of her. Now she turned her eyes to meet his full, and with a harsh, uneasy laugh that gave him a shock greater than any tears, she asked, "Somehow, I don't seem to run in luck, do I?"

He got the story from her more in detail. She told him of the funeral which had taken all but a very few dollars of her savings. Those she had used to come back here, where she had friends and might more easily find work. "I've got to go on living," she stated, recognizing the fact without sentiment, since there was not in her nature that strain which had made it possible for her suffering and disheartened young husband to put an end to his existence upon an earth where he had become but one of the superfluous.

"I stayed down in the waiting-room at the depot last night after the train come in," she told him. "It was warm there, and the lady, she let me, because I ain't got any money left,—not a nickel. I want you should lend me some, till I find work."

She had no more hesitation about coming to him with such demands than in the days when she had been a scantily clad and ill-fed little pariah of the Staunton streets.

To any one who knew her less well than did Manning, it might have seemed that she took her husband's suicide with an ugly indifference and want of feeling. But he understood her better. He had seen her, years before, swaggering around among her playmates of the tenements, red-eyed, pinched-faced, denying that she had cried over the baby's death, fighting with fists and feet and finger nails two or three children who had twitted her with it. The want of somebody or some-

thing to take care of, which had once expended itself upon the baby, was still strong in her, and Manning had always believed it to play a large part in her affection for the husband in whose character had been a slight tinge of weakness and dependence, due in part, no doubt, to his ill health.

Sitting there before him, in her poor and insufficient clothing, her wiry hair standing out in straight locks which showed now not even an attempt to curl, her skin red and blue from the outer cold, her whole attitude expressing a defiant determination not to show the grief and weariness she felt—she was a pathetic enough figure to any one who knew her whole story. Where in the upper walks of life, Manning asked himself, would one have found a young girl who would have been able, from earliest childhood days, to have shouldered the responsibilities which Nettie had borne, who would have showed her endurance, her pluck, and resource under every odd? It is a comfortable theory for the fortunate that merit must always win out, the fit survive.

She would, he foresaw, go out from here and manage before long to find work—she was of those who are certain to find it—and eventually she would have acquired some one to protect and take care of, whether it should be another husband or merely one as unfortunate as herself, but more weak.

He learned her plans for the present, got her promise

to report to him the results of her search for work, and having given her the five dollars, which was all she would consent to borrow, he went with her to the entrance of the hotel.

Then he turned back into the lobby, and going to the news stand bought a paper. As a rule he read it at his breakfast, but this morning he had had a pamphlet, in which he was interested, to finish.

He retired now to a quiet corner in the writing-room, where there was no one else save a middle-aged woman sitting at a desk engaged in what appeared to be the mentally and physically laborious task of writing a letter.

He read for some time, glancing through the many columns, rattling the paper as he turned the sheets, and laying aside one section after another. Suddenly he made a movement of so much abruptness that the woman at the desk threw a questioning glance in his direction. She could, however, see nothing of his face, which was hidden behind the journal. She went again at her writing.

Before long he stooped over, and gathering up the scattering sections, folded them roughly together and went out. She turned her head and peered after him. He had the look of a man who had received some blow of more than common severity, or who might be capable of doing a relentless murder.

He went up the stairs to his own room. There he

threw down upon the table all of the paper he did not want, saving out one part. He walked with this to the window, and standing there read through again the staring headlines, and the detailed account of Lockhart's speech at the small meeting upon the previous night.

A portion of the speech was given in full, the reporter having euphonized the speaker's phrases. It contained the accusation that the Staunton strike in Alan Tennant's time had been a failure because the chairman of the advisory committee had deliberately lost it, sold the interests of the workmen for the sake, and at the instigation, of a woman with whom he was in love — "a woman who would never have looked at him," the reporter quoted, "except with the contempt that she had learned from her father to bestow on the honest toiler, a woman whose broken flowers that she threw away Neil Manning had picked out of the gutters and kept, whose picture he carried around with him in a velvet case." And he had spoken of Beatrice by her name.

Manning's first intention, too deliberate to be called an impulse, was to find Lockhart and kill him. Then he began to realize that any such course, however gratifying to himself, would make much worse a situation already sufficiently bad for Miss Tennant. Had there not been that to consider, he would have found satisfaction in shooting Lockhart down and accepting the consequences.

It was not the charge against himself which angered him — he had disregarded or disproved others of the sort too many times before — but to have the love which he himself would have died before desecrating by speaking of it to any living being thus dragged out and flung to the mob, to have Beatrice's name — that of a woman who was without rightful protector — bandied about among the lowest men, spoken of contemptuously, spitefully, by such a creature as Lockhart!

And he was certain whence it must have come. He knew of Lockhart's relations with Mrs. Kemble.

But Beatrice Tennant — how would she account for it? He had asked her to believe in him, but this would be too great a test for any loyalty or faith.

Whatever else was to be done about it, he must justify himself to her. Upon that he determined. As for the course he should take after that — But was not she herself the one to dictate it to him?

He gave it some minutes of consideration, and ended with the decision that since she was the one most affected, she should be also the one to say what she wished done in the matter. To give her this opportunity, he must either write his explanation to her, or see her in person and give it verbally. He tried to be honest with himself in not allowing the wish to see her to be father to the thought that he should — that it would be the most thoroughly satisfactory method for both of them. Yet it might be that he half uncon-

sciously exaggerated the difficulties which putting upon paper what he had to say would present. He gave it thought, but he concluded the argument and conflict of inclinations by the decision that it would be better to see her. How could he write certain things in such a way as to be sure that she would understand them? The written sentence could convey to the reader a totally different impression from that which it was meant to have. And it would be one thing to let her know in words that Mrs. Kemble had been in his room—but set upon paper—what would be the effect? Altogether, to write would almost certainly prove as unsatisfactory to her as to himself. And, in a way, it would constrain her to a reply in kind, whereas she might much prefer not to be sending him letters.

He took out his watch and looked at it. At eleven o'clock he was to address a very large mass-meeting of workingmen. It was now a quarter after ten. He could not make it possible to see Beatrice before the meeting—even supposing that she should consent at all to having him do so. In any case he must get her permission, and be told when and where he was to present himself. To that end he would send a note to the Durran house by a messenger, who could bring the reply—should there prove to be one—to the hall where the meeting was to be held.

If Lockhart were to be at the hall— His teeth

shut together and his fists clinched. Under no provocation would he allow himself to take any step until he should have learned from Beatrice her will.

He sat down to his desk for the writing of a note which, though very brief, was yet the most difficult he had ever been obliged to undertake.

CHAPTER XXX

He will not be Thou, but must be himself, another than Thou.

—CARLYLE.

IT was Beatrice Tennant's intention to go to-day over to Lester's church in Staunton, since it might be long before she would be able to do so again. She was therefore ready rather early, and, coming downstairs, on her way out she passed the library door. It was open, and she saw Durran sitting by the window, reading the paper. In his comfortable chair, with the light falling through costly lace curtains upon his sleek brown hair and freshly shaven and powdered face, in his smoking jacket of black velvet just brightened by a dull red cord, with his large, white, well-kept hands, he made a satisfactory picture of the best type of a prosperous and active young American man of affairs, at the moment taking a well-earned ease. As Beatrice stopped to consider the scene, feeling the presence of a watcher, perhaps, he looked toward the door and saw her.

"Will you come in here, for a minute, please?" he said, rising.

She went forward, and Durran, taking up a sheet of

the voluminous Sunday journal, gave it to her without a word, but indicating with the eye-glasses he had removed, a headline, black and large, which ran entirely across the page, in the middle.

At the first instantaneous glance, she saw her own name and that of Neil Manning. Her face whitened, and her lips parted with a catch of the breath. Durran, observing her narrowly, saw it, and his own face took on a look of extreme displeasure. But Beatrice was not heeding him. He moved a chair nearer to her. She either did not see it or care to take it, for she remained standing and reading.

After the first sudden paleness, she showed no further sign than a slight trembling of the hands, which only some one watching her as closely as was Durran would have seen.

This time that he had taken her totally unprepared was the first sight of anything deeper than the apparently calm, unemotional surface of her life, that, in more than a dozen years of knowing her, he had ever been allowed to get. He had never supposed that a young woman of her rather unusual force of will and attraction, one who had led her unguarded and independent life had, in the depths of her nature, been always as unperturbed, unstirred, as she would have made it seem to the unimaginative majority of her acquaintances. But this particular revelation of what she had kept hidden and silent was a shock to him, a disil-

lusion. That the connection of Manning's name with her own was in her mind as well as in the journal, he had had to recognize when he had seen her pale at the first quick vision of the headlines. He kept silence as she read the article through, slowly. Then, as she turned to take the chair, he sat again in his own.

"That," he said gravely, "is a most unfortunate matter."

"It is very unfortunate," she acquiesced, "both for Neil Manning and myself."

"Manning is a man, and his shoulders are broad," he said shortly. "But you are a young woman with no natural protector. It is most unpleasant, to say the least of it."

Beatrice felt a dull resentment rising at his tone.

"After all, it is not a dire disgrace that a man should have cared for me — though he was of the same class to which I belonged for long after I was born."

There came to him the old wish that Beatrice would not so aggressively insist upon her origin.

"It is not desirable that the story of any such episodes in a girl's life should get into print at all," he said. "Of course you cannot prevent men of any class from falling in love with you, but it is not pleasant to have gossip for the mob made out of it — even at the best."

"Yet nobody seemed to take any great exception to it when the press rose to heights of rhetoric over Prince

Valerio and myself. Is it so much more creditable to be asked in marriage by a noble for whom one's money is the guiding consideration, than to be simply loved from afar by a respectable worker, who has not thought of asking anything?"

"You can't make it, Beatrice," he said, with badly hidden annoyance. "There is a difference, and you know it, though it may be one of those subtle differences which, like a good many other subtle but undeniable things, elude expression in words."

"Very well," she agreed, with a smile half of assent, half of some underlying determination. "I will grant that there is a difference which may affect others, but it does not affect me. If others find the situation something very nearly disgraceful, as you evidently do, John, why I must be lacking in feeling or discernment, for I do not."

For the first time in his life it occurred to him that he had perhaps escaped well in that Beatrice had not married him.

She leaned easily forward on the arm of her chair, looking into his face. "But you have been always the one who has said the finest things of him," she reminded. "You have called him a good man personally, and one of very considerable ability, — far above the average in any walk of life. You have even said that he presents a good deal better appearance than many of the men we know, who have turned their

talents to money-making instead of the practical handling of social problems."

"That is exactly how I see him — taken in relation to other men," answered Durran. "But it is *not* his aspect in relation to a woman like yourself."

She started to answer, but he interrupted her.

"My dear Beatrice, you surely must see it just as it shows forth in the story in the paper. Can't you understand that he has been so indelicate as to discuss you with others — to bandy your name about among rough, low men, like Lockhart?"

Beatrice's voice was ominously soft as she answered: —

"You may take my word for it, John, that he has never spoken of me in any such connection to a living being. If there is one thing upon which I would stake my own name, it is upon his entire respect."

"Then there is but one other supposition," said Durran. "Some one has found out that of which he did not speak. The most natural deduction in that case is, that it was some woman with whom he was upon intimate terms."

"That is a very unjustifiable deduction, it seems to me," she said coldly.

"Have you a better to offer?" he asked.

"No," she told him. "I will wait for his explanation."

Durran kept down his impatience with her. He turned off from that phase of the argument.

"Is this true about—the flowers and the photograph?" he asked, with a visible distaste.

Beatrice answered that she did not know, but believed it possible.

How had Manning obtained that photograph? he asked to be informed.

"Unless it was one—a tintype—which I had taken as a child, and gave to his mother—I can't say," she replied, a little restive under the cross-questioning.

This, however, Durran clearly did not mean to let drop at once.

"Does he keep up this undesirable sentiment toward you yet?" he said.

"He has not told me so, if he does," she evaded. "And, for that matter, he would not have done so in the past, had I not discovered it by an unfortunate mischance."

Could she, he inquired, suggest anything that had better be done. He put himself at her disposal if she should think that he could be of service.

She sat considering it. She was aware that it was now too late for her to start for Lester's church, and in any case she did not want to go either to Staunton, or elsewhere in public, while this story in the paper was yet so fresh and sure to be everywhere talked of. She was not, in fact, so indifferent to the position in which she

was placed as she chose, through a defensive sort of pride, to let Durran think.

"Is there anything I *can* do," she said at length, "except pass it over in silence? If there is any step to be taken it will have to be upon his part, I should say."

"Then if you will allow me to do for you that which you have no father or brother to do," Durran proffered, "I will see Manning, and prevent anything which might make the matter worse."

Beatrice gave it thought again, but she had no good or tenable reason for withholding her consent, and she gave it, — though, Durran could see, a trifle reluctantly.

"You must act," she ventured, "upon the supposition that he feels it far more than even I do — and that he will suffer from it more than I. You will do that?" she urged.

He had just agreed when there was a sweeping of silk skirts down the stairs and through the hall, and Evelyn hurried into the library, an excited and horrified face above the elaborate toilet she had been making preparatory to herself going to church.

"Beatrice!" she cried. "Have you seen the paper? Have you seen the terrible, disgraceful thing about you and — that man?"

By way of answer, Beatrice showed the sheet in her lap.

Durran, who knew that his wife had *not* seen the paper, but must have got the news just now from her maid,—as he had been unable to cure her of getting much other,—made an angry movement and looked black.

Evelyn's sympathy was as intense as her excitement, and she expressed both almost hysterically, not feeling just at first that Beatrice was not only calm under the shame, but something very like icily cold—with a coldness which was, it might have seemed, principally directed toward herself.

"This," she went on unwarned, "is the result of doing what I told you you ought not. This comes of being friendly with horrid, coarse people like that man."

"Evelyn—" Beatrice's voice was like an irresistible hand put out to hold her with a force in which she could not move. "Please don't keep on saying things of that sort."

Evelyn subsided instantly, but was aggrieved. "Don't you care?" she said. "Are you insensible to anything so mortifying? You are unusual and indifferent, I know, but surely you must feel *this*?" Beatrice admitted that she was not pleased with it—a phrase the inadequateness of which gave poor Evelyn a feeling of impotence before such blunted sensibilities.

Durran had gone to the telephone, and he came back into the room now, with the report that Man-

ning had left his hotel. "He has probably gone to address the mass-meeting," he opined, looking deeply annoyed. "It is most to be regretted. He will probably get into a quarrel with Lockhart, or be led into defending himself there; and the whole business will be made worse. It won't do for me to go there to see him. I should almost certainly be too late to stop him—and the fact of my presence would be seized upon by the reporters as a choice tidbit."

A footman, discreetly unobservant of the disturbed faces, came in with a note for Miss Tennant, and the information that a messenger was waiting for a reply. He withdrew, and Beatrice, opening the note, read it. Then she passed it over to Durran, without other comment than the statement that it was from Manning.

It contained, very briefly, Manning's request that he might see her for the purpose of offering her certain explanations which it would be difficult to write. And it gave her the assurance that until he should have some expression of her wishes he would treat the entire matter with absolute silence. The wording was that of one more used to business communications than to notes of this nature, but Evelyn, who read it over her husband's shoulder, was perhaps unconsciously surprised not to find it misspelled or ungrammatical.

Durran's brow, which had grown more clouded at the first lines, cleared as he finished.

"I give him credit for showing good judgment," he said. And then he added a supposition that Beatrice of course intended to see him—to have him come here.

Beatrice glanced at Evelyn, whose face was, without need for words, a protest of dismay.

"I am afraid that would be rather more than Evelyn could stand," she said.

"Evelyn will, naturally, consider what is best for you," answered Durran for his wife, in a tone of decision, which admitted no differing upon that much-tried little lady's part. "This is, for the present, your home. And it is the proper place for you to see him."

Beatrice, accepting it, went to write her answer. Having sent it, she came back to the library. Durran was not there, but Evelyn remained. She also had decided not to go to church, where she would have to meet at least the inquiring and pitying looks of her friends. She reverted to the subject at once, expressing herself decidedly and asking all manner of questions.

Beatrice's temper was not, in fact, so even as in appearance. Her anger was not slow, though it was long in expressing itself. But it was now very thoroughly roused, and rather than be provoked by

Evelyn to some expression of it, she presently went away and up to her own room, under the plea of making ready her trunk—her departure having been for a week past decided upon for that evening.

She did not fancy being looked upon as one almost disgraced, involved in and polluted by a scandal. She was glad that she would be going to where she would be less in the thick of commiserating acquaintances, ready to discuss the affair threadbare, — many of them, too, secretly enjoying her position, as a judgment upon her for her former aloofness and that belief in one's own superiority which independence of thought and action must always be taken to imply, thereby proving a cause of irritation.

In New York, where she would remain for the present, at any rate, the chances would be good that very few would have heard of the article in the paper. And there she would be untrammelled by that particular sort of solemnly petty mummerly and etiquette which vexed her here with Evelyn and Evelyn's kind, to whom it represented the reality of life.

Instead of setting at once about her packing, she went and stood by the window, looking over at the great, cold, white granite house, set back among the trees, whose branches were leafless now. She thought of herself as she had been when she had lived in there. She saw again the many scenes which had taken place within those gray stone walls. The evening when

Valerio had first come there and when she had sat talking to him in the buff and gold drawing-room, aware, even then, that she, daughter of a workingman, would have it in her power to become a princess.

The evening of the ball, when she had told Durran of her decision to marry the prince, and when she had come alone down the wide stairway, between banks of plants and flowers, feeling behind her, and dragging upon her jewel-laden shoulders, the gown heavy with cloth of gold—upon her heart another dragging weight, in the consciousness of her riches, her present importance and responsibilities, her future rank and titles.

The morning when she had stood by her father's bed and accepted Valerio to be her husband. The day, so soon thereafter, when she had told him that she could not marry him, had let him go away, and then had turned back into the silent house, a lonely young figure in her black, clinging draperies of mourning, but absolute mistress of her large fortune and of herself.

The years which were ahead of her—they would be little like those passed in the white granite mansion. She, who had so long been accustomed to prominence, to counting largely in her world, would be henceforth merely one of hundreds of thousands of unmarried women of very moderate means, would sink into an insignificance from which she had no special talent or ability that could raise her.

She would have friends still, probably many of them

—among those who cared for herself. But all the host of those who had been wont to seek her favor and court her chiefly because of that wealth which was, in their eyes, her first quality and recommendation—those would speedily let her drop from their lives and thoughts. She did not delude herself as to that. She had already seen the evidences of it. It had hurt her not a little—inevitably. Yet she would not miss them, she knew that, too. She herself would forget them.

The proper solution of her future, as most women in a position with so dull and lonely an outlook would have seen it, would doubtless be to marry, if she should have an offer from any one of sufficient social position and means to be considered a fairly good match. But she could not now, any more than in the past, be capable of marrying for a home and a husband.

She would prefer to that even a colorless and mediocre spinsterhood, whatever might be the opinions and wishes of those who ranked themselves, more or less truly, her friends.

What was it that a poet of the twelfth century had written, experiencing, even then, the eternal sameness of human nature.

Ce sont amis que vens importe,
Et il ventoît devant ma porte.

Why should she be capable only of negative opposition of the ideas of these friends, of friendship so light

that the wind of adversity could blow it away? Did her independence of their verdicts only extend to not marrying some man whom she did not want? Or was it equal to carrying her so far as to marry to suit herself, regardless of any strictures they might choose to pass upon her actions?

Would she simply end by being yet another of the great pusillanimous majority, one of those who allow their lives to be shaped by the standards of some for whose opinions and mental capacity they have nevertheless only complete contempt?

CHAPTER XXXI

Y puede decirse de él, lo que de pocos — que de la tela de sus sueños cortó su destino.

And it may be said of him, that which may be said of few — that from the cloth of his dreams he cut his destiny.

— PARDO BAZAN. *Los Padres del Santo.*

It was in the convention hall in which he had years since made his first public speech of importance that Manning was this morning to make another to a very similar and an even larger body of men.

And as that occasion had been one which was to determine much in his future, so was this one to be either a triumph or a failure which would put an end forever to his further pursuing his work as a leader and director of organized labor.

The way in which the men should prove to have taken Lockhart's accusation — which all would to a certainty have heard or read — would decide his course. If they believed the accusations, he could no longer, in honor, hold his place as their representative in any capacity. He would have left him no choice save to step down and out, discredited. The greeting he would receive in going upon the platform would amount either to an expression of no confidence, or

an acclamation of their sympathy and belief in his integrity.

He had come so late that he did not go into the hall by the main entrance, but by a rear one, reached through an alley between high walls, and which led directly into the passage behind the stage.

As he crossed that passageway, narrow, musty, and dark, he felt his heart cease beating, his whole body turn painfully cold, the nerves in his brain tighten in the dread of uncertainty. He opened the little door and stepped from the darkness into a full light, out upon the platform.

Down on the great floor before him was the human mass, crowding away to the distant wall, piling up blackly into the galleries — a mass in fact, an enormous aggregation without separateness, a sombre background against which showed vaguely to his blurred vision countless white things in rows, which were faces.

He knew that he must have been seen, have been recognized. But except for the undercurrent of shuffling, of moving always in the stillest crowd — there was silence.

He forced down his inclination to stop. With his head held more erect than usual and his forward bent shoulders squared, looking straight and sweepingly over the building, as was his common habit, he kept on to the seat which had been put ready for him. And even as he did so, his ears caught the rustle that they had

learned to know, and there burst out a roar, a pounding, a rending thunder of applause, like none which had ever greeted him before. It fell—and began again, with shouts now, and shrill, whistling calls.

It stopped. It recommenced. Over and over it wore itself out, took new strength, and swelled into enthusiasm. He knew that it could have but one meaning, that it was the expression not only of their appreciation of that which he had done in the two weeks just passed, but their belief in him at all times, their discredit of Lockhart's dastardly attack, their sympathy with him because of it.

* * * * *

It was well on into the afternoon, far later than he had expected it to be, when he was able at length to leave those who crowded to congratulate him, and turn off alone in the direction of Durran's house, walking hurriedly. The outflux from the hall was so filling the cars in all directions as to have made it a slow matter to take them, and in any case his movements would be less observed were he to go on foot, keeping to the less frequented streets. Upon Beatrice's account he did not wish it to be known that he had gone to the house where she was staying. It might make another story for the reporter.

The footman, obeying the order received from his embarrassed and mortified mistress, sent him into a little reception room at the far end of the hall, drawing

together the draperies across the door. It was a room which was seldom used, and into which he had been particularly instructed to show no one else who might chance to come.

Manning stood making pretence of looking at the water-colors upon the wall, though he saw them so little that if it had suddenly been asked him what they represented, his mind would have been a blank. He was only really aware that he was in a tiny place of pink and blue and gilt, with which his own large-limbed, dark-clothed self was quite incongruous — and that Beatrice would soon join him, when he would have to say to her things so difficult that he had given over planning them and had left the words he should use to chance.

But this time that he would be altogether alone with her, he would not lose his self-mastery as he had done that once in Lester's office. And he would have now no excuse in the failing of overstrained nerves, after days and nights without sleep and filled with anxiety.

He faced about to the door, as he felt, rather than heard, her steps. She pushed aside the portières and they fell together again behind her.

Whatever it had been that he had expected, it was not the same quiet, level look of the soft brown eyes, the same calm smile with which she had always met him.

He explained the reason for having come almost an hour later than the time she had set in her note.

"I went to the meeting," he continued, when she had seated herself on a frail pink satin settee, and he had taken a heavier chair of blue and the same elaborate curves and carvings of gold-leaf. "I went, knowing that I would be shown unmistakably whether the men trusted me still or believed Lockhart's charges as to my deliberately losing the strike. I found that it was the former. And afterwards it was impossible, for a while, for me to get away from the people who wanted to assure me of their confidence."

With what seemed to him an unwillingness to let him come to the real matter in hand, she spoke of the conference and its results as they affected him, questioning him as to his plans for the future. He was a little surprised at an evasion of the uppermost fact, which he would have thought unlike her, but he told her what it was his intention to do. As soon as the arbitration board should be ready to start on its experimental career, he would resign from his present office and devote his entire time to the board.

"Every state will have a local board of some sort," he told her. "This other, which will be a court of last appeal, and for interstate matters, will probably sit in New York. That, of course, will be where I shall live."

And then, with a determination not to remain longer

than necessary in this house of Mrs. Durran's, to which he had been so very reluctant to come that only consideration of Beatrice could have brought him, he opened the subject of Lockhart's speech.

"Will you tell me in what way you wish me to treat it?" he said.

"Is there anything to be done — now that your men have showed their belief in you?" she asked. "Is there any better course possible than to treat — the rest — with silence?"

He bowed his head. "It seems to me the best course," he said briefly.

Then his deep gray eyes looked straight and steadily into hers. "You understand, do you not, Miss Tenant," he asked, "that my regret of all this is so great that it is useless for me to try to put it in words?"

"I understand," she answered.

"But," he went on, "I owe you an explanation of how Lockhart must have come into possession of his knowledge. In fact, I owe it to both you and myself."

He stopped, and then obliged himself to continue. "It is not an easy thing to say to you. Perhaps, after all, I had better have written it. But there was a woman who came to my room once —"

Beatrice remembered Durran's severe words. Manning saw her hand move as if unconsciously, to grasp and close tightly upon the arm of the settee.

“A woman, —” he kept to it, — “who forced herself in, before I was able to prevent it.”

The grasp on the slight bar of guilt relaxed.

“It happened that I had upon my desk some pictures of yourself which I had cut from papers and magazines.” His face flushed darkly and painfully. “There was also the little tintype which you once gave my mother, if you remember — and a dried rose, one which you had one day broken off and dropped in the street. Usually I kept them locked from sight. But I had just then opened the box. The woman saw them, and she drew her own conclusions.” The dark flush had gone and his face had become of a gray pallor instead. “I have reason to believe,” he said, “that the woman sees Lockhart now frequently. It is probably she who told him.”

There flashed into Beatrice’s mind that which Lester had once told her of Mrs. Kemble, and she drew her own quick conclusion as to who the woman might have been.

Manning had finished, and with an almost angry sense that he might, after all, much better have written the thing than appeared to force himself here merely to say it, he rose from his chair. He stood looking down at her, much as he had stood in the far-off day in the office of Lester’s parish-house. And there was the same look upon his face that there had been then, save that it was less strained and worn.

"You told me once that you would try to believe the best of me always, whatever might happen. I hope that you did to-day—even so much against appearances."

She acquiesced with a grave, but somewhat unsteady, smile. It was as if she were making an effort to keep her eyes from falling before his.

"It has helped me through not a few difficulties in the past," he told her, "to feel that I had a sort of faith to keep with you. And it will help me now in the future. For," he spoke slowly, but with the deliberateness of intention, "I loved you then, and I shall love you always, I believe."

He moved away to turn to the door. Beatrice stood up, resting one hand still upon the arm of the settee. The other she held out to him. He took it, and he felt the slender fingers close upon his in a touch which trembled. Her eyes were turned up to his, and gradually, as he looked into them, the meaning of that which he saw there began to come to him. He knew that the other hand was being laid softly upon his arm. His own went up and took it. He put all the question into one word. "Beatrice?" he said.

She bowed her head in answer.

He drew her into his arms and held to his lips the fingers which still clung to his.



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